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**Perceptions of Nature in the Caribbean
Island of Dominica**

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Abstract

The Commonwealth of Dominica has acquired a reputation as the nature island of the Caribbean. This thesis sets out to explore how Dominicans perceive and relate to nature in their nature island. It considers these perceptions and relationships as consisting not only of people's cognitive and intellectual constructions of nature, but as also comprising their practices in and embodied engagements with the natural world. A key premise underlying this work is that people's ideas about and relationships to nature go beyond the discursive: they arise in and from historical, geographical and social contexts, but also emerge through particular personal encounters and experiences. So, for example, tourism and conservation are two prominent means by which Western constructs and discourse of nature are brought to bear in Dominica in the present day, but they also provide opportunities for engagement with the natural world and for the cultivation and expression of experiential knowledge. The focus on engagement and experience is consonant with Dominicans' thoughts about what it means to know and understand nature, in which considerable emphasis is placed on practical knowledge and knowledge by acquaintance. Further investigation of ideas of nature, through the use of selected collateral concepts, shows how Dominicans think about nature and certain relationships with nature as being an integral part of "what Dominica is about". Correspondingly, Dominica can be seen as providing the context and framework for their notions of what nature is about. The findings of this sort of place-based empirical investigation can be useful to the formulation of nature-related policies, in that such policies are more likely to have practical purchase if they are seen to be germane to local ideas of and relationships to nature. Research of this kind can also provide new answers to the interesting philosophical question: what is nature?

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I have been sustained by and am deeply thankful for the love, encouragement and laughter of my family, especially Julia Mayers, my other mother.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my aunt Elsie Yarde, to whom I owe so much.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me, that the work is my own, and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Thérèse N. Yarde

November 2011

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1 Introduction

Our island Dominica is called the Nature Isle of the Caribbean.

(Jno Baptiste, 1995:1)

This thesis has its origins in a holiday trip made in 2006 to the Commonwealth of Dominica, the island that is called the Nature Isle of the Caribbean.

I spent most of the flight from Barbados to Dominica gazing out of the aeroplane window, watching the clouds, the aquamarine of the sea and most of all the islands below, each lovely in its own way. Then the plane approached an island that particularly caught my attention. It seemed to me almost entirely, impossibly green, and the folds and creases, ridges and valleys of its terrain were spectacular. I had never seen anything like it. As the flight attendant passed down the aisle, I asked, “Excuse me, what’s that island we’re flying over now?”

“We’ll be landing soon,” she replied (and I detected, or perhaps imagined, a slight note of disapproval in her voice at my ignorance). “That’s Dominica.”

Throughout my stay in the Nature Isle, I remained in awe of the mountains, the forests, the rivers. Barbados, my home, is a flat, dry island, with a tiny remnant of forest and hardly anything that could properly be called a river. Dominica was a marvel to me. But as I marvelled, I found myself wondering if these mountains, rivers and forests, the island’s main natural tourist attractions, were to Dominicans as ordinary (which is not to say unappreciated) as Barbados’s natural attractions—sun, sea, and sand—are to me. How do Dominicans see, think about and experience the nature that surrounds them? How do they perceive and relate to nature in the nature island? What does nature—both the word and the material reality to which it is understood to refer—mean to them? This thesis seeks to provide some answers to those questions.

In so doing, this work is tangentially related to a prevalent concern among scholars with an academic interest in tourism, that is, the exercise of looking beyond how a tourism destination is represented in order to examine how the place and its touristic assets are understood and experienced by the people who live there (Smith, 1989; Ballerino Cohen, 1996; Selwyn, 1996; Meethan, 2001; Strachan, 2002; Sheller, 2003; Shaw and Williams, 2004; Wang, 2007; Sheller, 2007). It is kindred, too, to research that provides new perspectives on Caribbean landscape and nature, perspectives that go beyond—and sometimes destabilize—the imagery and imaginary of the Caribbean as a region of tropical island paradises (Arnold, 2000; Stepan, 2001; Strachan, 2002; Sheller, 2003, 2007; Thompson, 2007; Mohammed, 2009). Furthermore, it is firmly located as part of a long-lived dialogue about ideas of nature (Boyle, 1725; Collingwood, 1960; Williams, 1976; Soper, 1996; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Franklin, 2002; Williams, 2005; Castree, 2005). This dialogue has included contributions from a range of disciplines, including geography, philosophy, the social sciences, cultural studies, and natural resources management. It has been of interest to diverse scholars and practitioners with an interest in how people conceptualize nature and what this means for how they relate to the natural and social world. Within this wide-ranging dialogue, my research contributes to and is influenced by a body of work that directs attention to how ideas of nature are emplaced, embedded and embodied (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Franklin, 2002; Szerszynski et al., 2003b) in particular places and in particular geographical, historical and social contexts. Overall, my thesis responds to Mimi Sheller's call (2007:215) for "greater attention to the cultural shaping of nature, a neglected area in Caribbean studies".

One of my first tasks in undertaking this research was to acquaint myself with Dominica's history. As we shall see shortly, nature has been positioned as an integral element of this history.

Another aspect of the early stages of my research involved consideration of the word nature, its uses and meanings. In fact, I grappled with the slippery word through the research process, before finally accepting that there was a

degree of inevitable imprecision associated with the complexity and polyvalency of the term. As philosopher Kate Soper puts it, “merely to contemplate [its] range of usage is to sense a loss of grip on what it is that we here have in mind” (1995:1). Later in this chapter I present a brief review of the literature that has influenced my thinking about and understanding of the word that has notoriously been labelled as perhaps the most complex in the English language (Williams, 1976).

A third task involved clarifying what I mean when I speak about how people relate to nature. In this regard I was influenced by the view, expressed by Phil Macnaghten and John Urry, that “an appropriate poetics of nature would be ... one which stems from how people talk about, use and conceptualize nature and the environment in their day-to-day lives, in their localities and other ‘communities’” (1998:3).

In this introductory chapter, I present and discuss the results of these preliminary exercises, and then go on to present a brief outline of what is to come in the main body of the thesis. I begin with a synopsis of the history of the locality in question.

1.1 A Brief History of Dominica

Dominica is the most mountainous island in the Caribbean. Twenty-nine miles long and sixteen miles wide, it lies between the French islands of Martinique to the south and Guadeloupe to the north. The island rises in places sheer out of the sea, towering in a series of jumbled peaks to a height of almost 5,000 feet. This rugged landscape of blue-green slopes, rushing streams and cloud drenched mountain peaks has given the island a legendary beauty, a fatal gift some call it, which has created both major problems and great advantages for those who have lived there. More than most islands, the environment has guided the course of Dominica’s history.

The steep mountains, rising above many of the other peaks which make up the chain of the Antilles, brought

rain and with it thickly forested slopes and well watered valleys. This environment gave the early Caribs a natural fortress against the European settlers and kept Dominica uncolonised for a longer period than other islands. It prevented the development of very large estates and cut down on the profits of sugar and coffee. The forests gave the Maroons protection from slavery and later provided the freed slaves with land to begin a peasant society. Well into the twentieth century, the terrain made communications difficult and hindered development: Dominica's story is not only of battles between men, but even more so, the battle between man and the island itself.

(Honychurch, 1995:ix)

Dominica (Figure 1) is a volcanic island in the Eastern Caribbean, part of the archipelago that constitutes the Lesser Antilles. The current population is approximately 70,000 (Dominica Central Statistical Office, 2005; The World Bank, 2011). It has been reckoned that human settlement of Dominica began sometime between 4,000 and 3,000 BCE (Baker, 1994:19; Honychurch, 1995:15). From that time until the island was sighted by Columbus and his crew in 1493, it was settled by a succession of Amerindian peoples whose origins were in the Orinoco Basin region of South America (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). At the time of the first European observation of Dominica, its residents were the Kalinago people, who came, through European misunderstandings, to be known as Caribs (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Honychurch, 1995). The Kalinago had been settled on Dominica for some 100 years before European arrival, having conquered and assimilated the island's previous occupants (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). The Kalinago knew the island on which they lived as Waitukubuli, meaning 'tall is her body' (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). Columbus christened it Dominica after the day of the week (Sunday) on which it was sighted (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Honychurch, 1995).

For some 200 years after Europeans first set foot on Dominica's shores, the island remained largely the domain of the Kalinago, who repelled efforts to take control of the island (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995).



Figure 1: Map of Dominica (Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, 2006; accessed at <http://www.dominica.gov.dm/cms/?q=node/8>)

Eventually, however, repeated onslaughts by European invaders reduced the number of Kalinago and restricted their settlements to a small area on the island's eastern coast (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). During this period Dominica was nominally a Kalinago island, so declared by treaty between France and England (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). In practice, by the 18th century the island was a French territory in all but name, being extensively "illegally occupied by French settlers" (Niddrie, 1966:76).

Between 1761 and 1783, the island was captured by and formally ceded to the British, reoccupied by the French, and returned to British colonial rule, which continued uninterrupted for almost 200 years (Niddrie, 1966; Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). The British attempted to transform Dominica into a sugar island along the lines of their older and more established Caribbean colonies, but the sugar plantation system never achieved any great level of success in Dominica (Trouillot, 1988; Burnett and Uysal, 1991; Honychurch, 1995; Green, 1999). The mountainous and thickly forested terrain was not conducive to the type of agriculture that had prospered in other Caribbean islands.

After the 1834 abolition of slavery in the British Empire there was a "very sharp decline in the labour force" (Trouillot, 1984:77) on plantations in Dominica, as the ex-slaves departed the estates in large numbers. Former slaves who left the estates generally founded new settlements on unoccupied land in the interior or along the coast, and established their own gardens where they grew crops for domestic use and, occasionally, some small amount of cash crops such as sugar, coffee or cacao (Trouillot, 1984, 1988; Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). It was in this immediate post-Emancipation period that the Dominican peasant tradition, with its roots in slavery times, became entrenched.

During the 19th century estates in Dominica declined in size and productivity due to the loss of labour, crop disease, and the impacts of a series of ruinous hurricanes (Trouillot, 1984; Honychurch, 1995). Some 150 years after the emancipation of the slaves, Dominica was depicted by British observers as a

colony in grievous decline (Froude, 1888; Hamilton, 1894, cited in Honychurch, 1995:147-148; Bell, 1903, cited in Honychurch, 1995:148-149). The island experienced intervals of relative prosperity based on the production of cocoa, limes, and vanilla, but for most of the first half of the 20th century, the economy was stagnant (Trouillot, 1988; Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995; Green, 1999).

By the mid 1940s, a new crop had appeared on the scene, one which would dominate Dominican agriculture for some fifty years to come. This crop was the banana. Bananas quickly became the island's main export. The growth of the banana industry in Dominica and the other Caribbean Windward Islands—Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent—was accompanied by growing interest from and intervention by external players, including Geest Industries, the Commonwealth Development Corporation and the British government (Thomson, 1987; Trouillot, 1988; Grossman, 1998; Clegg, 2002). Despite external investment in large banana estates, the crop was more successfully cultivated on small peasant plots (Baker, 1994). As banana exports rose steadily from the 1940s until 1969, the number of larger (10 acres or more) estates fell, while the number of small farmholdings (those smaller than 10 acres) increased (West Indian Census of Agriculture, 1946, 1961, 1974, cited in Baker, 1994:148), and “money flowed into the hands of the peasants as never before” (Honychurch, 1995:208). Other crops did well during this time, but none so much as the banana (Trouillot, 1988; Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). Bananas were the mainstay of the Dominican economy—“banana was king”, Dominicans say—such that it could be said, in 1998, that “the banana is part of local culture and the banana farmer is admired” (Pattullo and Jno Baptiste, 1998:57). However, the industry was always controlled by metropolitan British interests, not by the islanders themselves (Trouillot, 1988; Baker, 1994; Grossman, 1998).

Banana exports from Dominica began to decline in the 1970s, both in tonnage and in value (Baker, 1994). This decade was a turbulent one for Dominica, marked by considerable social and political upheaval (Honychurch, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). A signal event of the period was the achievement of national

independence. On November 3, 1978, Dominica became an independent republic, known formally as the Commonwealth of Dominica. Independence meant a new constitution and brought the adoption of new national symbols.

The national anthem, "Isle of Beauty, Isle of Splendour" pays tribute to the island: the "rivers, valleys, hills and mountains", the "healthy land", the "clime benign and bright", the "pastures green and flowers of beauty". The coat-of-arms includes images of the Sisserou parrot (*Amazona imperialis*), the crapaud (a large frog, *Leptodactylus fallax*, also known locally as the mountain chicken), a fruited coconut tree, a fruited banana tree, and a Kalinago canoe on the ocean (Honychurch, 1995, n.d.). The island's ceremonial mace, carved specifically for Independence from local woods (Honychurch, 1995), is topped by a carving of a Sisserou in flight. The Sisserou also takes pride of place at the centre of the flag. The flag's colours (see Figure 2) of green, black, white and yellow represent respectively the island's abundant forests, rich soil, clear waters and bright sunshine (Honychurch, n.d.). The national motto, *Après Bondie c'est la Ter* (Figure 3), is in Dominican Creole; in English it means, "After God, the Land".

In *The Dominica Story*, Honychurch says that the words of the motto "symbolise what to many Dominicans is the essential natural pattern of their lives. . . . [E]very islander is ultimately reliant on the viability of agricultural production" (Honychurch, 1995:206).

However, this essential natural pattern has changed since those words were written. For many years, bananas from Dominica and other Caribbean countries enjoyed preferential access to the British market, but beginning in the 1980s, this privilege was gradually eroded by the amendment of relevant trade agreements (Grossman, 1998; Clegg, 2002). Dominica had long been an agricultural island, its history marked by the dominance and decline of a series of crops: coffee, sugar, cacao, limes, vanilla, citrus, coconuts, bananas; but in the 1990s, a sea-change occurred. As one Dominican told me, "We had to stop planting bananas. So we planting a new crop now. We planting tourists" (Trevor, 60s, Wallhouse).



Figure 2: Mural of Dominica's national symbols—the flag, the Sisserou parrot, the *Bwa Kwaib* flower. Pointe Michel, Dominica (photo by author)



Figure 3: Mural of Dominica's coat of arms, featuring the national motto *Après Bondie C'est La Ter*. Pointe Michel, Dominica (photo by author)

Government ministers and policymakers have represented tourism as being of prime importance to the post-banana Dominican economy (Burnett and Uysal, 1991; Bellot, 2001; Wilkinson, 2004; Pattullo, 2005; interview with Esther Thomas, Ministry of Tourism). Dominica's natural attributes, previously seen as the main contributor to its underdevelopment, have now come to be perceived as its chief touristic assets (Shankland Cox and Associates, 1971a; Weaver, 1991; Duval, 2004; Pattullo, 2005; Dominica Ministry of Tourism and National Development Corporation, 2006; Daye, 2008). Over the past 25 years, tourist arrivals to Dominica have increased more than tenfold, from approximately 35,900 in 1986 (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2001, cited in Pattullo, 2005:155) to 594,000 in 2010 (Caribbean Tourism Organization, 2011). It remains to be seen whether tourism, and nature-based tourism in particular, will be inscribed as a significant chapter in the Dominica story of the relationship between people and nature.

1.2 The Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature

I have often looked upon it as an unhappy thing, and prejudicial both to philosophy and physic [*sic*], that the word nature hath been so frequently and yet so unskilfully employ'd by all sorts of men. For the very great ambiguity of this term, and the promiscuous use made of it, without sufficiently attending to its different significations, render many of the expression wherein 'tis employed either unintelligible, improper or false.

...

The best way to discover the common opinion of nature, is, to consider what axioms pass for current about her, what titles and epithets are unanimously given her by philosophers, other writers, and by the generality of men who have occasion to discourse about her, and her actions.

(Boyle, 1725:110)

Here, I take Robert Boyle's advice, presenting a brief survey of notions of nature as they have been discussed by people who have had occasion to

discourse about it. It seems fitting that I should begin with Boyle himself. I will conclude with a clarification of how the concept of nature is understood, approached and deployed in this thesis.

In his *Free Inquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature*, Boyle makes an attempt to clarify the perilous ambiguity of the word 'nature' by prescribing alternative and, to his mind, more precise, terminologies for some of its more common denotations (Boyle, 1725; Hadley Brooke, 2009). He identifies and proposes alternatives for eight denotations of 'nature', but acknowledges that there are a number of other "absolute acceptations of the word nature [and] several others more relative" (Boyle, 1725:109). There is a sense that Boyle's essays towards greater precision in the use of the word are destined to be defeated by its conceptual complexity (Williams, 1976; Soper, 1995; Hadley Brooke, 2009). Boyle himself admits that

'tis far more difficult than any one, who hath not try'd, would imagine, to discourse long of the corporeal works of God, and especially of the operations and phenomena attributed to nature, and decline the frequent use of the terms, of forms of speech whereof 'tis a principle part; without frequent and tedious circumlocutions (Boyle, 1725:110).

Boyle's concerns about people's "imperfect and confused notions concerning nature" (1725:109) were not merely about matters of semantics and wrangling about words. Rather, the majority of his inquiry served as a response to what he saw as the ill effect that the 'vulgar notion of nature' was having upon religion. Boyle was very much opposed to notions of nature that implicitly or explicitly endowed nature with agency and power. He saw such notions as falsely

[representing] merely corporeal, and often inanimate things, as endow'd with life, sense and understanding; and ascribing to nature and some other Beings, things that belong to God alone... (pp. 113-114).

Boyle's disapproval of using 'nature' in a way that usurped the power and authority that he felt rightly belonged to God is one instance in a sustained

debate about the relationship between God and nature (Williams, 2005). The general formula for this relationship, according to Raymond Williams, had been one that positioned “God [as] the first absolute, but Nature [as] his minister and deputy” (Williams, 2005:49). But even this formulation was controversial, as we see from Boyle’s scornful reference to God’s “pretended viceregent nature” (Boyle, 1725:149).

Williams suggests that after the Scientific Revolution, and particularly after Darwin’s formulation of the theory of evolution, nature superseded God: “Nature the minister or deputy ... has been widely succeeded by Nature the absolute monarch” (Williams, 2005:50; Williams, 1976). Thus one of the three areas of meaning Williams associates with the word ‘nature’ is that to which Robert Boyle was so strongly opposed: nature as “the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both” (Williams, 1976:184).

The other senses of nature Williams identifies are “the essential quality and character of something” (1976:184) and “the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings” (1976:184).

Ginn and Demeritt (2009) connect Williams’s three senses of nature to Castree’s (2001) definitions of universal, intrinsic and external nature respectively, but I think they overplay the correspondence between the two schemes for conceptualizing nature. For instance, they describe external nature as referring to “the external, unmediated material world” (Ginn and Demeritt, 2009:301). But for Williams (1976) nature in the sense of the material world can possibly include human beings, whereas Castree’s external nature specifically positions nature as “inherently nonsocial and nonhuman” (Castree, 2001:6).

This notion of nature as external to humanity is thought to fill the need for humankind to “have a word for that ‘world out there other than ourselves’” (Hadley Brooke, 2009:317; see also Williams, 2005). Kate Soper has also defined nature in these terms:

In its commonest and most fundamental sense, the term 'nature' refers to everything which is not human and distinguished from the work of humanity. Thus 'nature' is opposed to culture, to history, to convention, to what which is artificially worked or produced, in short, to everything which is defining of the order of humanity. ...'[N]ature' is the idea through which we conceptualise what is other to ourselves." (Soper, 1995:15-16).

This is what Soper refers to as the metaphysical concept of nature. She distinguishes this from two other concepts. One is the realist concept in which 'nature' refers to

the structures, processes and causal powers that are constantly operative within the physical world, that provide the objects of study of the natural sciences, and condition the possible forms of human intervention in biology or interaction with the environment. It is the nature to whose laws we are always subject, even as we harness them to human purposes, and whose processes we can neither escape nor destroy (Soper, 1995:155-156).

The other, she calls the lay or surface idea of nature in which

'nature' is used in reference to ordinary observable features of the world. ...This is the nature of immediate experience and aesthetic appreciation; the nature we have destroyed and polluted and are asked to conserve and preserve (Soper, 1995:156).

We see in this last quote evidence of Soper's interest in what she terms 'eco-politics' or "the politics of environmentalism" (Soper, 1995:160). Soper argues that while environmentalism is explicitly concerned with protecting nature in its lay or surface sense, implicitly it draws on the metaphysical concept of nature. She is of the opinion that environmentalist assertions that human interventions are damaging nature or that humans should protect nature presume a separation between nature and humankind (see also Castree and Braun, 1998). Soper's (1995) exploration of eco-politics, and of the other ways in which concepts of nature are deployed, illustrates how various notions of

nature overlap and interact in ways that are sometimes mutually reinforcing and sometimes contradictory.

Phil Macnaghten and John Urry (1998) also address eco-politics and environmentalism. They discuss what they term the doctrine of “environmental realism” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:1), which they see as having been extremely influential on the way people have been thinking about nature since the 1970s. Environmental realism is the claim that

the environment is essentially a ‘real entity’, which in and of itself and substantially separate from social practices and human experience, has the power to produce unambiguous, observable and rectifiable outcomes ... the very notion of nature itself has been turned into a scientifically researchable ‘environment’ (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:1).

Apart from their interest in how nature has been re-invented as the environment, Macnaghten and Urry also point out the multiplicity of meanings attached to the idea of nature. Nature can refer to:

the essential quality or character of something; the underlying force which lies behind events in the world; the entirety of animate and inanimate objects, and especially those which are threatened; the primitive or original condition existing prior to human society; the physical as opposed to the human environment and its particular ecology; and the rural or countryside (as opposed to the town or city) and its particular visual or recreational properties (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:7-8).

Like Soper, Williams, and even Boyle, Macnaghten and Urry are not just concerned with identifying what prevailing notions of nature are, but also with examining how those notions are used. They write that

Once we acknowledge that ideas of nature both have been, and currently are, fundamentally intertwined with dominant ideas of society, we need to address what ideas of society and of its ordering become reproduced, legitimated, excused, validated, and so on, through appeals to nature or the natural (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:15).

Their survey of the ideas of nature and the ways in which these ideas have been used leads them to conclude that “there is no singular nature as such, only natures. And such natures are historically, geographically and socially constituted” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:15). Their work is part of a body of research in which “human geographers have made a concerted effort to *de-naturalise those things conventionally seen as wholly or partly natural*” (Castree, 2005:26, emphasis in original). Within this corpus we encounter the idea that nature is a social construction, that “there is no such thing as *Nature*, there are only competing social visions of nature” (Urban and Rhoads, 2003:220). Therefore “when geographers talk about nature in their research and teaching ... they are not talking about nature, but that which they *call* nature” (Castree, 2005:35, emphasis in original).

Demeritt (2001), Franklin (2002) and Castree (2005) are among those who have surveyed the debate about realism vs. social constructivism with regards to nature. For my part I hold the view that while it is important to recognize that our ideas of/about nature are distinct from the ‘natural’ things to which we attach them, it is also true that, in the lay sense (Soper, 1995) at least, “the things we call nature undoubtedly exist” (Castree, 2005:35) and that the designation ‘nature’ matters “in the sense that it colours how we understand, and behave towards the things [it] refers to” (Castree, 2005:35). In this regard my research concerns itself with people’s ideas of nature, their thoughts about the things they refer to as nature, and their interactions with the things that they refer to as nature.

In his discussion of arguments about constructivism and realism, Franklin concludes that

social constructions of nature do not and should not obliterate the value of conceptualising nature also as an objective reality, a real materiality that exists prior to any social constructions that people may put on it (Franklin, 2002:51).

Franklin makes the point that nature is not just socially constructed, it is also known via experiences of and encounters with its ‘real materiality’. As such

attention should be given to how “nature is performed ... as a *lived* or *dwelt* experience” (Franklin, 2002:7, emphasis in original).

This idea of nature as performed and practised has come to prominence in the last 15 years or so, as geographers and other social scientists have expressed an interest in how people engage with nature via sensory and embodied experience (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998, 2001; Franklin, 2002; Crouch, 2003a; Crouch and Malm, 2003; Szerszynski et al., 2003b; Thrift 2008). Their work points out that the visual has long been privileged as a means of sensing nature (Urry, 1995, 1999; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998, 2001; Soper, 1995; Franklin, 2002; Wylie, 2007) and calls for attention to be paid to how nature is experienced through the full range of senses in the course of activities performed in natural spaces and in respect of nature generally. While emphasis on visual experiences of nature tends to result in the production of nature as landscape (Weigert, 1981; Soper, 1995; Urry, 1995; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Wylie, 2007), other ways of interacting with nature, other sensory experiences and bodily practices, can create different definitions and understandings of nature and the natural world. Drawing on Lefebvre’s (1991) concept of the production of space, we can conceive of how people make sense of nature and the natural world through bodily performances and practices such as walking (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998), gardening (Crouch, 2003a), fishing and hunting (Franklin, 2002; Marvin, 2003), swimming in the ocean (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998), and even eating (Franklin, 2002; Horton, 2003; Ginn and Demeritt, 2009). Mimi Sheller has drawn attention to how colonizers’ embodied experiences in the Caribbean influenced 16th and 17th century European perspectives of nature; she asserts that “in attempting to experience, see, touch, smell, taste and represent these iconic island-worlds, new forms of sensing nature and a new relation to landscape developed in Europe” (Sheller, 2003:47).

Work on people’s practices of nature has sought to challenge the conflation of nature with the environment and of nature with landscape. It has also involved something of a departure from notions of nature as wilderness and countryside (Fitzsimmons, 1989; Cronon, 1996; Franklin, 2002). Franklin in

particular has made a call for social science accounts of nature that look at the ways in which nature and the natural are experienced as part of everyday life, in spaces other than the rural. While he acknowledges that work is a means of coming to an embedded and embodied understanding of nature, his catalogue of “the natures of the everyday” (2002:8) still seems slanted towards accounts of leisured and recreational nature, which people encounter by activities such as walking in parks, relaxing on beaches, and picnicking. He is not alone in this regard; his treatment, or lack thereof, of work is reflective of a wider academic neglect of “the ways that work itself is a means of knowing nature” (White, 1996:171). In chapters 5 and 8 of this thesis, I look at how nature and interactions therewith are part of tourism work and conservation work in Dominica.

In my exploration of the notions of nature as discussed so far, I have found it difficult to rid myself of one nagging concern, about the lack of attention to people’s own accounts of their ideas, knowledges and experiences in relation to nature. Franklin has this to say

[What is nature?] This is no doubt an interesting philosophical question, but it is not for sociologists to pose or attempt to answer such questions. Rather, our job is to understand what these words (and indeed these questions) mean and do for the people who use them... (Franklin, 2002:21)

Few of the scholars mentioned thus far in this section have made a central concern of how people respond to this interesting philosophical question when it is asked. They have not focused on how laypeople articulate, explicitly and directly, their opinions, attitudes, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, values and ideas concerning nature. I find it difficult to reconcile myself fully to the idea that we can adequately understand what nature (the word and the materiality) means to and does for people without that sort of direct empirical consideration of how people talk about their ideas of nature and their experiences of the natural world. In the absence of such consideration, scholarly analysis is in danger of reproducing the situation Franklin deplores, wherein what are represented are the meanings of nature as

elucidated and agreed upon by privileged and educated elites. “Other understandings and practices, some based on spatial differences..., others on folk traditions, historical continuities and so forth” (Franklin, 2002:23) will continue to be overlooked and under-represented.

Fortunately, researchers with an interest in natural resource management and conservation (i.e. researchers who embrace the environmentalist discourse that Franklin, Macnaghten and Urry, and others critique) have shown a more direct interest in people’s ideas about and concepts of nature. Their research in this regard is substantially instrumental: knowledge about how people think about nature is seen as strategically important for natural resources management (Cheng et al., 2003; Buijs, 2009). However, it is also valuable as a means of insight into nature’s complex symbolic load (Soper, 1995), what nature does and means for people who not only use the word, but also engage with the material reality to which it refers.

For example, research into people’s lay understandings of nature in The Netherlands (Buijs, 2009), into perceptions of the naturalness of New Zealand landscapes (Newton et al., 2002), and into people’s feelings of connectedness with nature in midwestern America (Vining et al., 2008) can all be seen as empirical explorations of ideas about whether people see themselves as separate from or part of nature. Buijs’s (2009) research also examined people’s beliefs about dynamism and stability in relation to natural processes; connections can be made between his empirical investigation and academic theorizations about realist concepts of nature.

Research into people’s ideas of nature has also drawn on concepts of place (Relph, 1976; Canter, 1977; Gustafson, 2001; Cheng et al., 2003) by looking at people’s personal relationships to particular natural places (see, for examples, Hull et al., 2001; Gunderson and Watson, 2007; Schroeder, 2007; Hood et al., 2011). Personal accounts of the meanings and importance of the places in question provide insight into how people conceptualize nature and naturalness. They also illustrate how particular located engagements shape and reflect the ways in which “people respond cognitively, aesthetically, and

hermeneutically to what have been constructed as the signs and characteristics of nature” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:2).

However, in these types of research little reference is made to those thinkers mentioned in the earlier portion of this chapter, whose work has involved theorizing nature and developing “formal intellectual frameworks for explaining and evaluating myriad different society-nature imbrications” (Castree, 2001:18).

In my effort to discover common opinions about nature in Dominica, I adopt strategies and insights from various corpora of work. My discussions of how Dominicans conceive of nature are influenced and informed by the theories and frameworks developed and discussed by scholars like Williams, Soper and Castree. I have a distinct interest, like Macnaghten, Urry and Franklin, in how nature is produced and apprehended through embodied experience and practice. I place great value on how people’s own representations and personal accounts serve to “provide a perspective on those aspects of the nature experience that are ... elaborated on and used to create meaning” (McIntyre and Roggenbuck, 1998:402). In this thesis I use a synthesis of these key elements as a means of finding out how Dominicans themselves think about nature, about what it means, and about what it does.

1.3 Relating to nature

In describing my research I have been accustomed to refer to people’s relationships to nature in Dominica. I think of these relationships as comprising people’s perceptions, practices and conceptions with respect to nature. To be somewhat more precise, I consider a person’s relationship to nature to involve both her conceptions of nature and her accompanying perceptions and practices in respect of the natural world.

In his analysis of perception theory, Paul Rodaway (1994) explains the two dimensions of perception expressed in the term’s everyday use. These are (1)

perception as sensation: “the reception of information through the sense organs” (Rodaway, 1994:10) and (2) perception as cognition: mental insight that “involves remembering, recognition, association and other thinking processes — which are culturally mediated” (Rodaway, 1994:11).

Rodaway argues that a proper geographical concept of perception must acknowledge both these aspects. But, as he further explains, recognition of these two dimensions of perception, while necessary, is not sufficient for an effective understanding of how perception functions. An expanded geographical definition of perception acknowledges that perception is multi-sensory, corporeal, and an acquired, culturally influenced, skill. Incorporating these additional elements results in a geographical understanding of perception as a process that “involves the sense organs (including the body) and the mind, but is also situated in and mediated by a geographical and cultural environment” (Rodaway, 1994:13).

Rodaway points out that in the past enquiries into how perception shapes people’s relationships with space and place have emphasized perception’s cognitive dimension. This tendency is evident, for instance, in a 1992 paper on environmental perception in Barbados (Potter, 1992) in which perception is investigated by means of a survey of cognitive constructs. More recent research on perceptions of nature and the environment in the Caribbean (see for examples Momsen, 2000; Bailey, 2003; Christian et al., 2009) also demonstrates this emphasis on cognition. Perception is discussed in terms of awareness, memory, explanation, justification, understanding and, of course, knowledge. The focus is on mental insights and thinking processes, rather than on the reception of embodied sensory impressions. This tendency is also seen in other research, from outside the Caribbean, about people’s perceptions of nature, in which researchers discuss respondents’ concepts, values, attitudes, preferences, beliefs, definitions, evaluations, opinions and logic (see for examples Horowitz, 2001; Newton et al., 2002; Davenport and Anderson, 2005; Natori and Chenoweth, 2008; Hunter et al., 2010). Much attention is paid to how people make sense of things, but little is given to how people use their senses (Rodaway, 1994). In my research, I draw on

Rodaway's expanded definition of perception, considering how the sensual and the intellectual both function to give "a sense of a world" (Rodaway, 1994:11).

In his writing on perception, Rodaway proposes that perception is not merely the passive reception of information from the environment, but also includes active exploration of and manoeuvring in that environment. We do not just see or hear, we look (and look for) and listen (and listen for). Similarly, we sniff, inhale, savour, sample, feel, probe and handle. The sensory aspects of perception are not just the world acting on the body, but also the body acting on (and in and with) the world.

This being the case, my interest in people's practices with respect to nature could be considered an extension of my interest in people's perceptions. Both involve an attention to how people relate to the natural world through active engagement; in the case of practice there is a more explicit concentration on intentional human action and activity.

Phil Macnaghten and John Urry were in the vanguard of researchers concerned with "how nature becomes embodied and embedded in daily life" (1998:104) through sensory experience and human practice. As they explained in *Contested Natures*,

...it is specific social practices, especially of people's dwellings, which produce, reproduce and transform different natures and different values. It is through such practices that people respond, cognitively, aesthetically and hermeneutically, to what have been constructed as the signs and characteristics of nature. Such social practices embody their own forms of knowledge and understanding and undermine a simple demarcation between objective science and lay knowledge (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:2).

Macnaghten and Urry (1998, 2001) are concerned with the ways in which practices are discursively ordered; they discuss how people's behaviours and actions are indicative and productive of (or at odds with) particular constructs and discourses of nature and the natural. Adrian Franklin (2002)

takes a similar approach, but expands his analysis beyond what he sees as Macnaghten and Urry's undue emphasis on leisure practices in touristic rural spaces. In Franklin's consideration of "everyday natures" rather than "tourist natures" (2002:8), he draws attention to how mundane practices and habits (including habits of consumption) provide insights into the relationship between humanity and nature, nature in his analysis being understood as both a social construction and a material reality.

While I have adopted Franklin's notions of 'everyday nature' and adapted his term 'tourist nature' (to 'tourism natures', recognizing that tourism is more than just what tourists do), my consideration of practices as a factor in human-nature relations is closer to that espoused by David Crouch (2000, 2001, 2003a, 2003b), particularly in his work on allotment gardening in the United Kingdom. Compared to Macnaghten and Urry and Franklin, Crouch takes a more intimate approach to his enquiries into how practice and performance affect and effect people's ideas about nature. He is less interested in how embodied practices reflect, resist or reproduce predominant pre-figured discourses of nature, and more interested in how individuals form and negotiate their notions of nature through "a process of doing" (Crouch, 2003a:17). Crouch makes it clear that he is not rejecting the idea that the wider cultural context influences and informs how people in their everyday doings understand and make sense of nature. However, he argues that:

ideas of nature emerge and are worked in complex processes that may be self-consciously grounded in ideas about nature and may be not. Ideas of nature emerge in the lives of [people] through what they do and how they feel (Crouch, 2003a:18-19).

Another feature of Crouch's research that I have taken up is the notion that people's practical ontologies of nature incorporate their feelings about nature as well as their ideas. To quote him once again, "what we 'do' in practice may include facets of everyday life such as 'enjoyment', love and care, as well as frustration and tasking" (Crouch 2003a:19). Additionally, our embodied actions and activities in relation to nature allow us to express and

make manifest our feelings, ideas and values, not only about nature itself, but about our selves and our worlds in general.

I move now to my interest in people's conceptions of nature. I do not see this interest as being at odds with my desire, previously intimated, to de-emphasize pre-figured and underlying causative meanings, and to emphasize sensation, practice and embodied engagement. Rather it is an acknowledgement of how nature is a conceptual construct as well as a material reality. Without wishing to pre-empt the presentation and discussion of my results, the inclusion of this particular aspect as part of my consideration of people's relationships with nature resulted from, rather than preceded, my initial exploratory fieldwork in Dominica. During that time, it became evident, through conversations and observations, that it would be inadequate to view orientations to nature solely in terms of people's interactions with material things or even in terms of their ideas about a category or class of material things. This realization unseated my own posited meaning of nature. I had been concerned initially with investigating what the word 'nature' denoted, but my findings made me aware that it was also essential to enquire into what it connotes.

In enquiring into these connotations, however, it is not my assumption that the meanings associated with nature constitute *a priori* knowledge, producing people's practices. Nor do I see it as being the case that people's practices are entirely generative of the meanings they associate with nature. It is not my intention to determine a relationship of cause and effect; rather I treat practices and conceptions as complementary aspects of people's orientations to nature. So when I speak of how people relate to nature in Dominica, this should be understood to include consideration of how people think about and experience nature and the natural world sensuously, cognitively, practically, actively, and conceptually.

1.4 Chapter outlines

Chapter 2 comprises a discussion of my research methodology, using a 1979 research paper about Dominicans' perception of the environment as a point of departure. I argue that one of the flaws of this earlier work was the researchers' seeming reluctance to recognize that other ways, apart from their own, of perceiving nature could be valid and sensible. The paper's authors, Ringel and Wylie (1979), have fallen prey to two troublesome orthodoxies (Silverman, 2007). First is the explanatory orthodoxy, in which people's behaviours are reduced to being mere products of social structures and variables—in this case Ringel and Wylie make much of Dominicans' status as "provincial and colonial people" (p. 45). The second is the divine orthodoxy, which "even when it examines what people are actually doing, ...measures their activities by some idealised normative standards" (Silverman, 2007:89). I use Ringel and Wylie's essay as a point of reference in my explanation of how I have sought to minimize these errors in my own work. I go on to describe my chosen research methods: interviews, observation, participation, and archival research.

Chapter 3 introduces some of the literature about perceptions of and relationships to nature in the Caribbean. There are three main parts to this review. The first is concerned with literature that examines and critiques, in a post-colonial vein, colonial and contemporary representations of Caribbean nature, with a particular interest in how that nature has been depicted and constructed as landscape. The second body of literature I engage with comprises studies of Caribbean people's perceptions of and attitudes towards nature, land and the environment. As I will show, one of the main differences between most of this work and my own research is that the earlier work treats nature (or land or the environment) primarily as a pre-given material reality, with little or no explicit consideration of how Caribbean people conceptualize nature. I close the chapter with a brief survey of some of the ways in which Caribbean-born novelists, playwrights, essayists and poets have written about nature in the region. These writings, which are increasingly the subject of study for scholars with an interest in

ecocriticism, are fine examples of how Caribbean thinkers have been reflecting on and interrogating prevailing ideas about Caribbean nature.

In chapter 4 I look at how both the Kalinago, particularly in the years of early French settlement, and the black peasantry, in the years after the British abolition of slavery, were portrayed as having careless or trivial relationships with nature. My discussion of these (mis-)representations is carried out in some of the same spirit as the post-colonial critiques reviewed in chapter 3, but my focus differs slightly in that I direct my attention not to colonial depictions of Caribbean nature *per se*, but to depictions of Caribbean people's relationships with nature. My argument is that the disparagement of Caribbean nature relations involved in these misrepresentations was a salient aspect of rationalizing early French and later British colonial activity in Dominica. Furthermore, particularly in relation to representations of the Kalinago people, these early depictions have left their traces in current thinking about human-nature relations.

Chapter 4 includes some discussion of present-day relationships to nature in Dominica, but my treatment of this topic begins in earnest in chapter 5, where I attend to nature in Dominica as a touristic object. In chapter 5, I use data gathered from interviews and observations to show how tourism practice affords practitioners (and by practitioners of tourism, I am not referring to tourists) opportunities to develop, express and share their relationships to nature. The discussion includes an emphasis on sensuous embodied experience of the natural world, a theme continued in chapter 6, where I look at how Dominicans other than tourism practitioners experience and practice nature, and at how they describe its role in their lives. In chapter 6, the focus is on how people's concepts and understandings of nature acquire meaning and find expression through embodiment and experience, how "ideas of nature emerge in [people's] lives ... through what they do and how they feel" (Crouch, 2003a:18-19).

In chapter 7, I investigate how the word nature was defined by Dominican respondents. This includes the use of four collateral concepts—the

environment, changing times, development, and the natural—as a means of deepening and contextualizing my understanding of what nature in Dominica means to Dominicans. I show that the notion of nature as ‘the environment’ does not appear to have strong conceptual purchase in Dominica. Dominicans’ ideas and insights about nature and the natural are more richly expressed in terms of their knowledge and experiences of *their* environments, their understandings, not only of nature *in* Dominica, but the nature *of* Dominica.

Despite somewhat ambivalent responses to the concept of ‘the environment’, environmentalist perspectives of nature as something to be protected are prominent aspects of how Dominicans talk about nature, a phenomenon that reflects the global rise of ecological discourse (Soper, 1995; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Franklin, 2002). Chapter 8 examines some recent debates and discourses related to environmentalism and nature conservation in Dominica. My argument here is that conservation messages are most likely to be palatable to Dominicans when they are grounded in a sense of localness. Additionally, I highlight the work of Dominica’s Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, as an example of how conservation is an embodied practice, in addition to being a discursive concept.

Finally, in chapter 9 I offer a brief concluding consideration of the significance of my research and its findings. I believe that my work and research like it incorporates an empirical component that is an important and informative contribution to academic analysis and theorizing about concepts of nature. It demonstrates the value of examining people’s ideas about and attitudes to nature in context, or rather, in *contexts*, because contextualization is multi-layered and multi-dimensional. It helps to make connections between people’s concepts of nature and their practices of nature, that is, to integrate the various aspects of how nature is perceived. And, of course, it answers my initial research questions about Dominicans’ perceptions of nature in Dominica, in ways that go far beyond what I had in mind when I first formulated them. In this sense it has considerably expanded my own

initially rather prosaic concepts of nature, and has enriched my understanding and appreciation of Dominica, both the land and the people.

2 Method

[In Dominica], there is no concept of nature, as such...
(Ringel and Wylie, 1979:42)

Unfortunately, self-understanding does not really come so easily, and a serious—let alone sympathetic—understanding of others comes even less easily.
(Ringel and Wylie, 1979:39)

During my first field trip to Dominica, a number of people recommended that I read an essay written in the 1970s about how Dominicans see and think about the environment. It was suggested that it might be a useful and informative model for my research. I located a copy of the essay in question—‘God’s Work: perceptions of the environment in Dominica’ (Ringel and Wylie, 1979)—and did indeed find it useful, in that it clarified my thinking about attitudes and approaches that I wished to avoid; it was less of an antecedent and more of an antithesis. In this chapter, I use Ringel and Wylie’s paper as a starting point for discussion of my own methodological approach to investigating people’s perceptions of nature in Dominica.

2.1 God’s Work

Ringel and Wylie’s report was based on 15 months—from 1977 to 1978—of anthropological fieldwork in Scotts Head, a fishing village in the south of Dominica. Their paper was intended to answer the questions they posed (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:39) of “what Dominicans see when they look into the hills and out to sea—what is their conception of what we call the natural environment? How does this inform their attitude towards the use of natural resources?”

The short answer to these questions, according to Ringel and Wylie, was that when Dominicans looked into the hills and out to sea, they saw God. The authors then provided a longer answer in which Dominicans are presented as greedy, jealous, superstitious, mistrustful and mean-spirited. The authors seemed to think it important for the reader to know this, that we could not understand Dominicans' attitudes to nature without first being told in considerable detail what petty and exasperating people they were. Eventually Ringel and Wylie declared that amongst Dominicans "there is no concept of nature, as such" (p. 42).

As Ringel and Wylie saw it, they had "made explicit the patterns [they had] found implicit in Dominican life" (p. 45). They advised the reader that Dominicans themselves "do not and cannot appreciate the implicit coherence of their everyday life" (p. 45). Ringel and Wylie were of the view that, like other Caribbean people and like "provincial and colonial people generally" (p. 45), Dominicans had a warped view of their own culture; they understood themselves only in relation to foreign values, and saw their own mores through "distorted borrowed spectacles" (p. 45) as "inferior ... incoherent ... despicable nonsense" (p. 45). The reader was thus made to understand that not only were Dominicans incapable of self-knowledge, they were also self-loathing mimic men (Naipaul, 1967). Presumably we are also to understand that while Dominicans mistakenly attempt to make sense of their everyday lives using means "derive[d] from fundamentally different cultures" (p. 45), the means that Ringel and Wylie used, "following the anthropologist's habit" (p. 45), to perform the same task on Dominicans' behalf are entirely appropriate and largely culture-free.

Dominicans' ignorance is presented as having its advantages. Ringel and Wylie suggest that it allows one to use one's foreignness and one's white skin to "engage in a little cultural imperialism" (p. 47) and so to promote the view that "'nature' is beautiful and natural resources are something to be conserved" (p. 47), to advance "the idea that a parkland or preserve might exist for everyone's benefit" (p. 47), and to foster the development of a conservationist ethic. By outlining the ways in which one might "exploit" (p.

48) Dominican attitudes, traditions, institutions, and social structures in order to foist upon them a Western ethic of environmental concern, Ringel and Wylie close their essay on what they describe as “a ... hopeful, practical note” (p. 47).

I find Ringel and Wylie’s article, and their apparent disdain for their research subjects, offensive. But their paper is problematic in ways that go beyond any personal affront that it causes to me as a (provincial, colonial) Caribbean person.

2.2 Dangerous Orthodoxies

Ringel and Wylie’s essay provides examples of two orthodoxies that researchers in the social sciences would do well to avoid: the explanatory orthodoxy and the divine orthodoxy (Silverman, 2007).

2.2.1 The Explanatory Orthodoxy

The explanatory orthodoxy involves a tendency to see people’s ideas, actions and perceptions as being solely the product of society and social structures, and thus explainable by means of social variables such as ethnicity, social class, or level of education (Silverman, 2007). This orthodoxy involves seeing analysis as a way to show how things really are, as a way to “explain that which is apparent, observable, or known, by identifying an underlying (transcendental) causally-generative order of powers, mechanisms, structures, processes” (Pleasants, 1999:22 cited in Dewsbury et al., 2002:437). In this vein, in ‘God’s Work...’ much is made of Dominicans’ provincial and colonial condition, and of their belief in God and the supernatural. As a result, there is a lack of serious analytical engagement with matters of if, how and why the natural environment is meaningful to Dominicans as part of their day-to-day lives. There is little consideration of how their understandings of nature relate to their experiences of and practices in relation to the natural world. In the attempt to explain Dominicans’

perceptions of the environment in terms of overarching social structures and value systems, what happens is that “the phenomenon escapes”, as David Silverman (2007:89) has phrased it. That is, there is an unfortunate lack of consideration given to the properties of the Dominican environment, to how people live with and in that environment, or to how their experiences, historical and contemporary, of that environment relate to their perceptions.

2.2.2 The Divine Orthodoxy

Ringel and Wylie’s paper also shows evidence of the divine orthodoxy, which positions the social scientist as “a philosopher king (or queen) who can always see through people’s claims and know better than they do” (Silverman, 2007:88). There is clear evidence of this in the assertion that people in Dominica (and provincial and colonial peoples in general) “cannot appreciate the implicit coherence of their everyday life” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:45). Ringel and Wylie’s attitudes in this regard seems similar to that demonstrated by Andrew Weigert in his writing on *The Sociology of Everyday Life* (1981). Weigert positions sociological (or, in the case of Ringel and Wylie, anthropological) knowledge and everyday knowledge as different ways of understanding reality. In his view, the first order data provided by a study of everyday life is most valuable when used by social scientists, with their wider systematic and superior objective knowledge of reality, to produce second order constructs that will explain the world. In Weigert’s view, sociological ideas are necessary because everyday knowledge is insufficient for an understanding of everyday life. Such an approach, as Silverman explains, tends to “preclude seeing the good sense of what people are doing or understanding their [practices] in local contexts” (Silverman, 2007:89). As Weigert himself says, “almost everyone knows what is needed to live normally” (1981:25). Had Ringel and Wylie given greater credit to Dominicans’ ways of living and points of view, they might have been less dismissive of local concepts of nature.

2.3 Normative notions of nature

Another shortcoming of the divine orthodoxy is that “even when it examines what people are actually doing, [it] measures their activities by some idealised normative standards” (Silverman, 2007:89). In the case of “God’s Work”, Dominicans’ perceptions of the environment are being measured against the standards of a “secular ecology” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:44) and “the idea that nature is beautiful and natural resources are something to be conserved” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:47).

Overall, Ringel and Wylie’s own perceptions of the environment bear the characteristics of an attitude to nature that has been described as “environmental realism” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:1). Through the lens of environmental realism, nature becomes ‘the environment’, an entity that is best understood in terms of rational ecological science. In environmental realist analysis, the social practices and everyday engagements through which people formulate their perceptions and lay knowledges of nature are given scant attention, because “the realities which derive from scientific enquiry are held to transcend the more superficial and transitory patterns of everyday life” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:1). Ringel and Wylie’s attitude of environmental realism can be seen, for instance, when they make the assertion that fishermen in Scotts Head may know something of “the natural order of things” (p. 44)—i.e. the behaviours of the ocean and of fish—but “do not orient their actions so much in terms of nature” (p. 44). In this statement there is the portrayal, characteristic of environmental realism, of nature as something beyond the realm of everyday knowledge and practice, as an ecological system “which, in and of itself and substantially separate from social practice and human experience, has the power to produce unambiguous, observable and rectifiable outcomes” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:1). The workings and processes of nature are seen by environmental realists to be most appropriately understood via the systematic application of scientific method—a secular ecology—to produce accurate, objective and value-free environmental knowledge (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Castree, 2005).

Another feature of environmental realism is its tendency to view nature as “a set of finite physical resources” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:16) that both constrains and is threatened by human activity. Nature and its resources are thus treated as entities requiring management and protection from human exploitation (Soper, 1995; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Castree, 2005). In Ringel and Wylie’s essay this treatment is evident in their repeated representations of nature and natural resources as being in need of preservation and their continued emphasis on the importance of conservationist attitudes.

As mentioned, the other feature of Ringel and Wylie’s normative standard is the idea that nature is beautiful. This idea is emphasized in the paper by means of repeated references to nature’s beauty and several descriptions of nature as scenery. Leaving aside the question of whether nature is always and necessarily beautiful, in “God’s Work” there is a clear tendency to treat nature as an object of visual experience and appreciation. This is implicit even in the research question: “what do Dominicans *see* when they *look* into the hills and out to sea?” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:39, emphasis added). In this question the privilege accorded to the visual (“what do they see when they look...”) largely excludes other means by which Dominicans might apprehend and acquaint themselves with nature. Furthermore the focus in the question is not just on looking, but on a particular type of looking (“into the hills and out to sea”). What is described here, and elsewhere in the paper, is a landscape way of seeing (Wylie, 2007). In order to perceive nature in this way the observer must position herself outside of nature, away and apart from the object of her gaze. The landscape way of seeing establishes a particular relationship to the world (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Urry, 2002; Soper, 2003; Wylie, 2007), “locating the viewer outside of the picture and outside of the relations being depicted” (Thomas, 1993:21). Such an emphasis on this sort of visual experience of nature from a distance is inconsonant with how Dominicans perceive the hills and the sea (and the land in between). It leads to neglect of experiences and understandings of nature that are not grounded in the gaze or that relate to elements of nature that are closer at hand than up in the hills or out to sea.

In general, the statement that “the idea that nature is beautiful and natural resources are something to be conserved is quite foreign to Dominican thought” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:47) is as revealing, if not moreso, about Ringel and Wylie’s perceptions of the environment as it is about the perceptions held by the Dominicans who are supposed to be the subjects of the research.

It should not be inferred that I believe that Ringel and Wylie’s concepts of nature are inherently flawed, or that they are inapplicable or irrelevant to Dominica purely because they are not local or indigenous. Nor do I mean to imply that Ringel and Wylie should be faulted for having their own ideas of what nature is; it would be unreasonable to expect them not to. To Ringel and Wylie’s credit, they are cognizant of the subjectivity that they bring to their research. This is evidenced, to some extent, by their references (emphases mine) to “what *we* call the natural environment” (p. 39) and “what *we* call nature” (p. 44). Furthermore, they explicitly position the concept of natural beauty as a relatively recent and culturally specific Western notion and acknowledge their “‘environmental concern’ [as] an ethic as culture-bound as any other” (p. 47).

The difficulty I have with Ringel and Wylie’s essay is that although the authors recognize the cultural specificity of their perceptions of nature, they seem unwilling to concede that other ways of thinking about and understanding the natural environment might also constitute valid concepts of nature.

It is this failure to grant recognition to other perspectives that seems to have led Ringel and Wylie to maintain that Dominicans have no concept of nature (as such), despite also telling us that when Dominicans look at nature they see God’s work. Ringel and Wylie wrote that according to the Dominican view, “God gave the land for people to grow their food and a fallow field affronts the generosity of this gift,” (p. 42), “the lush pharmacy of the hillsides testifies to His goodness” (p. 42), “wild things are a direct gift from God” (p. 42) and “the sea remains unclaimed in God’s domain” (p. 43). To

my mind these are all decidedly concepts of nature; I believe that Williams (1976), Soper (1995), Macnaghten and Urry (1998), among others, would agree. In my opinion Ringel and Wylie would have been more correct to say that Dominicans did not share *their* concept of nature, their notion of a secular ecology. The authors' failure to recognize Dominican concepts as concepts, and to acknowledge alternative ways of thinking about and understanding nature, had implications that extended beyond the merely academic. It provided justification for the "little cultural imperialism" (p. 47) which was advocated as being necessary to foster "western concepts of the natural environment" (p. 47), promote conservation and make Dominicans see and appreciate beauty in nature.

I reiterate that I am not taking issue with conservationist or aesthetic approaches to nature in and of themselves. I am concerned about attitudes that advocate their imperialistic imposition and that associate their apparent absence with backwardness and ignorance. And, more to the point of this chapter, I take issue with how Ringel and Wylie assess people's perceptions of nature not on their own terms, but instead with reference to an idealized normative version of nature, such that the perceptions of "ordinary people ... are bound to fail" (Silverman, 2007:89).

2.4 What we call nature

Having said this, it would be disingenuous of me to represent myself as having come to this research as a blank slate, with none of my own ideas about what nature is. At the start of my research I outlined my personal idea of nature as consisting of objects (both living and non-living) and phenomena (weather, natural disasters) that are not manufactured by human beings, and of natural places as those that have not been manifestly modified or affected by human intervention. Included in this conceptualization of nature was the idea that interactions with nature are not necessarily limited to natural places. So to my way of thinking, farming and the cultivation of botanic gardens, for examples, would be cases of encounters with nature

even though the places where they occur, having been produced through human intervention, are not natural *per se*.

Establishing this personal definition of nature involved recognition of some of its inherent assumptions (e. g. that human beings and their actions are not part of nature), contradictions (e. g. that interactions with nature can take place in a place that is not natural; that a place can be non-natural even though it is made up of natural objects), and subjective judgements (e. g. how does one assess whether a place has been “manifestly” modified by human intervention?). Despite these apparent weaknesses in the definition, its strength was that it more or less corresponds, even in its very imprecision, to what Soper (1995) calls the ‘lay’ (or ‘loose’ or ‘surface’) idea of nature, “nature as a domain of observable phenomena and directly tangible forms” (p. 180), “nature as it appears in everyday experience” (p. 181). As such it provided a serviceable starting point for conversations about and observations of relationships and interactions with nature.

The definition was also useful in that acknowledging the inexactness of my own notion of nature helped to prepare me to be receptive to other definitions and understandings. Unlike Ringel and Wylie, I did not dismiss or disregard concepts of nature that differed from mine, even though in some cases these differences were more substantial than I had anticipated. I have, as much as possible, sought to avoid having my own notions of nature decide or predetermine my findings and the analysis thereof (Dewsbury et al., 2002; Whatmore, 2003; Silverman, 2007). Instead I attempted to proceed cautiously (Silverman, 2007) and to be “hospitable . . . to whatever happen[ed]; to ... whatever arrive[d]” (Dewsbury et al., 2002:438). In so doing I have found that the data that developed has greatly exceeded my initial framework for thinking about nature, pushing my analysis in new and unexpected directions (Crang, 2003).

Being open to whatever happened meant accepting and embracing pluralism (Dewsbury et al., 2002). In allowing for people’s perceptions of nature to differ from my own, I also made space for them to differ one from the other.

While I have not refrained from drawing attention to particular commonly occurring concepts or widely held ideas, I have tried to avoid a “flourish of generalisation” (Dewsbury et al., 2002:437; see also Whatmore, 2003) in which the variety and individuality of people’s perceptions of nature would be made to conform to a tidy framework that would define or constitute ‘the Dominican view of nature’.

By avoiding this sort of generalization, I have also tried to avoid falling prey to the explanatory orthodoxy. I have not undertaken my research with the intention of making Dominican understandings of nature intelligible via the judicious application or formulation of theory. Rather, I have operated on the assumption that their understandings of nature already make sense, in that they underpin and substantiate people’s day-to-day living in the world that they inhabit. I do refer to and make use of prior theories and theoretical thinking in my discussion and analysis of the empirical data. However, I do not do this with the aim of validating or explaining people’s perspectives by means of theory. Rather, I think of my analysis as an encounter between my own framework of intelligibility and those of the people who participated in my research (Dewsbury et al., 2002; Crang, 2003).

2.5 Final words on ‘God’s Work...’

Having subjected Ringel and Wylie’s essay to a somewhat unforgiving critical assessment (with the concomitant risk of criticism for imposing present-day values on the past), it seems worthwhile to present a more neutral and relatively recent review of their paper and its findings:

Gail Ringel and Jonathan Wylie (1979) found in Dominica that foreign, Western concepts of environment “including ideas of conservation and natural beauty” were not easily accepted. The researchers found that attitudes towards nature are shaped by religion: nature is seen as part of a system which focuses on humankind’s relationship with God. The environment consists of three realms: the natural the social, and the supernatural, the latter controlling

all. Fishing, for instance, has both social and religious aspects: a good catch is proof of the generosity of God, but too much fish will inspire the jealousy of neighbours. The sea is ... seen as abundant, inexhaustible. ... Undeveloped areas are seen as ugly and/or sources of profit. ... Their results led Ringel and Wylie to view the church as the institution most likely to foster an environment ethic (Jaffe, 2006:233).

I feel it necessary also to make it clear that my research was not formulated in order to directly respond to, rebut or update their study and its findings. However, my encounter with and appraisal of their work served, via contrast, to highlight some of the methodological underpinnings of my own research.

2.6 Methods

In total I spent approximately nine months, spread over three visits, doing fieldwork in Dominica. The first interval was three and a half weeks in May and June 2009. I returned to Dominica in mid-September 2009 and stayed for 10 weeks until December 2009. My final research trip spanned the period from January to May 2010.

As I planned and carried out my fieldwork in Dominica, I found it helpful to reframe my initial research questions, as given in chapter 1, in ways that lent themselves more clearly to empirical investigation. This resulted in two queries. First, how do Dominicans experience and interact with nature and the natural world? And second, how do they think about and conceptualize nature and the natural world? My two principal investigative methods generally correspond with these two questions.

2.6.1 Participant observation

For the most part I sought to answer the question of how Dominicans interact with nature by using observational techniques. This approach is grounded in the idea that everyday meanings and knowledge can reveal

themselves through what people do and how they do it (Spradley, 1980; Pollner and Emerson, 2001; Gubrium and Holstein, 2003; Whatmore, 2003; Silverman, 2007). Through observation, I was able to learn about how people interact with the natural world, and to apprehend some of the understandings, attitudes and meanings that are contained and expressed by people's practices and activities.

My observations were made in several different contexts. The first involved my participation in guided nature tours in Dominica. I participated in four such tours. The first was a bus tour to the Ti Tou Gorge and Trafalgar Falls. The second tour, in an open-topped four-wheel-drive vehicle, also visited the Ti Tou Gorge, and included stops at the Botanic Gardens and in the village of Wotten Waven. Third, I attended a garden tour in the village of Giraudel. My fourth outing was an aerial tour of the rainforest in the vicinity of the village of Laudat. Observations from these tours were recorded by means of video, photographs, and field notes.

A second set of observations was made while I visited and worked with Dominicans in their gardens. Most of my observations in this regard were made while working on a voluntary basis at a community garden maintained by the Giraudel-Eggleston Flower Growers' Group and at a privately-owned botanical garden. In both cases I assisted with the maintenance of the plants and grounds. I also made observations during time spent in the villages of Giraudel and Bellevue Chopin. I stayed for approximately five weeks in each village at the home of a local family, as well as spending time with other villagers at their homes and in their gardens. In all these cases, data was recorded by means of field notes and photographs.

The third important opportunity for observation came when I accompanied officers of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division (FWPD) during the execution of their responsibilities related to natural resource management, monitoring and conservation. I went out with forest officers on three occasions: the first to the forests overlooking the village of Pichelin, the second to the area of Soufriere and Petit Coulibri, and the third to the

Matthieu Lake. All of these sites are located in Dominica's Roseau/Southern forest zone. The expeditions with the FWPD were documented via field notes and photographs.

2.6.2 Interviews

Answers to the second question, that of how people think about and conceptualize nature and the natural world, were obtained largely via semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). I interviewed 91 people (see Appendix B), 59 men and 32 women, talking to them about nature in Dominica and about their ideas concerning nature in general. Of these 91 interviewees, 61 are quoted or cited in this thesis.

The first tranche of interviews, conducted mainly in May and June 2009, targeted people officially and/or formally involved in environmental management, agriculture and tourism. Interviewees included representatives of various government agencies, including the Division of Agriculture, the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, the Fisheries Department, the Environmental Coordinating Unit, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Discover Dominica Authority. These respondents consented to the use of their real names and job titles, and are so listed in Appendix B along with the names of the agencies with which they were employed. This phase of interviewing also involved several private sector hoteliers, tour operators and tour guides, who are identified in Appendix B by pseudonyms. Most of these interviews were arranged via correspondence prior to my arrival in Dominica, but some of them were the results of referrals from other research participants. All of these interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (see Appendix C for sample transcripts), and transcripts were e-mailed to respondents for their review, comments and corrections.

The second phase of interviewing took place during my subsequent research visits to Dominica, between September 2009 and May 2010. In this tranche of interviews, I spoke mainly to people who were not formally affiliated with the sorts of sectoral agencies and organizations described above. These

interviewees were found via convenience and snowball sampling. Respondents came from approximately 35 different towns, villages and districts, both rural and urban, across the island (note that some interviewees associated themselves with more than one village or neighbourhood), and ranged in age from 22 to mid-70s. Levels of formal education varied, with some interviewees having received only a primary school education and others holding advanced university degrees. A variety of occupations and professions were represented: I spoke to, among others, farmers, fishermen, engineers, artists, scientists, media workers, politicians, electricians, lawyers, teachers, carpenters and ministers of religion. The majority of these interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (see Appendix C for sample transcripts). However, in some instances, interviewees declined to be recorded and the interview was instead documented by means of handwritten notes. All interviewees were offered the option of reviewing a copy of the transcript, interview notes and/or relevant audio files, but the majority of respondents did not avail themselves of this opportunity. Interviewees quoted in this thesis are listed in Appendix B under pseudonyms. Other interviewees are listed in Appendix B under pseudonymized initials.

It should be noted that the fit of methods to research questions was not exactly one-to-one. Observant participation, for example, allowed me not only to watch and witness people's embodied action, but also to engage in and be an audience to informal situated talk, rather than pointed question-asking, that provided insight into people's concepts of nature and their ideas about the natural world. Similarly, some of what I learned about people's practices in relations to nature and the natural was derived from interviews, people speaking about their activities, rather than from actual observation of these activities.

2.6.3 Researching texts

A third research strategy involved engagement with a variety of texts. My research was informed by exploration and review of scholarly literature,

theory, data and analysis from a variety of secondary sources. Additionally, I reviewed other textual materials, which fell into four main categories.

The first category consists of colonial accounts of nature in Dominica. These are texts prepared by European authors in the period between 1493, when Columbus first sighted Dominica, and 1978, when Dominica became an independent country. They include travelogues, reports prepared by colonial officers and by various colonial commissions, and monographs that were intended both to describe the island of Dominica and to champion its commercial potential as a colony. These documents were found in the collections of the University of Edinburgh Library, the library of the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), and the National Library of Scotland. The aim of my exploration of these texts was to acquaint myself with historical representations of and discourses about nature in Dominica. These texts are discussed mainly in chapter 4, *Historical representations of nature relations in Dominica*.

The second group of texts included documents related to the management of Dominica's natural resources and the development of the tourism sector. Here I examined policy documents, reports, promotional matter and public education materials produced by or at the behest of the government of Dominica. Several of these documents were accessed via the official website of the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica (<http://www.dominica.gov.dm/>), or provided by the Ministry of Tourism or the Discover Dominica Authority. One key document, a 1971 tourist development strategy (Shankland Cox and Associates, 1971a&b) was accessed in the West Indian Collection of the UWI at Cave Hill. Tourism statistics were obtained via the Government of Dominica website and via the website of the Caribbean Tourism Organization (<http://www.onecaribbean.org/>). In sum, these documents provided me with insight into the development of Dominica's tourism sector and the emergence of official local discourses and depictions of nature in Dominica; they are discussed primarily in chapter 5, *Tourism natures*.

A third body of texts consisted of legislation and regulations, both past and present, relating to natural resource management in Dominica. Some of these documents were obtained via FAOLEX (<http://faolex.fao.org/>), a database of legislation maintained by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The majority of legal documents referred to in this thesis—in chapter 8—were accessed in the private library of Mrs. Ursula Harris in Dominica.

The final set of texts, also discussed principally in chapter 8, comprised back issues, dating from 2000 to 2009, of the *Chronicle* newspaper. These volumes were located in the archives of the Roseau Public Library in Dominica. The *Chronicle* is one of two newspapers published weekly in Dominica; there are no daily newspapers. Review of the newspaper archives provided a record of shifting, emerging and conflicting discourses of nature in Dominica in the first decade of the 21st century. It also provided a recent historical context for several of the issues referred to by interviewees, allowing me to see how their views and ideas connected to events, discussions and debates that were taking place locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.

Further to this, over the approximately nine months that I spent in Dominica, my research was appreciably supplemented by observations and conversations that took place outside of the immediate research context. News broadcasts, television programmes, chats with friends and acquaintances, overheard exchanges between passengers on buses, attendance at public events, lectures, and meetings, messages on roadside signs and billboards: all of these encounters served to enrich my understanding of meanings of and relationships with nature in Dominica.

3 The Literatures of Caribbean Nature

In this chapter, I review two main bodies of academic work. (Additional literatures are discussed in subsequent chapters, in the context of ideas arising for consideration in those chapters.) One relates to colonial representations of nature in the Caribbean; the other comprises research about Caribbean people's perceptions of, engagements with and relationships to land, landscapes and their natural environments. These two corpora of work have influenced and informed the spirit and character of my own research into how Dominicans relate to nature and the natural world. I close the chapter with examples and discussions of how Caribbean nature and relations thereto have featured in the work of Caribbean writers and thinkers. Such work shows how consideration of nature and nature relations in the Caribbean contributes to richer understandings of the region, its history and its present.

3.1 Colonial orderings of Caribbean Nature

I address myself first to the first category of research, which traces and interrogates colonial encounters with and depictions of nature in the new world, particularly the tropical zones of the global south. Scholars researching and writing in this vein undertake to explicate European cultural and philosophical concepts, traditions and discourses that underpinned and ordered colonial practices and representations of nature, land and landscape in these newly 'discovered' regions of the world. In so doing, they illuminate how the culture and power of the European colonizers worked to produce persistent ideas of and about tropical nature. These insidious imaginative constructs, awarded the status of empirical description (Stepan, 2001), continue to be influential and instrumental in the present day imagined geographies (Said, 1978; Gregory, 2001) of the Caribbean.

Take, for instance, what is one of the most hackneyed representations of the Caribbean: its portrayal as an assortment of tropical island paradises. This trope is commonplace to the point of cliché in the domain of tourism promotion (Britton, 1979; Silver, 1993; Ballerino Cohen, 1995; Sheller, 2003; Pattullo, 2005; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008) but there is more to it than mere advertising contrivance (Sheller, 2003). These present-day imaginations of the Caribbean “pick up on longstanding visual and literary themes in Western culture based on the idea of tropical islands as microcosms of earthly Paradise” (Sheller, 2003: 36).

Sheller (2003) draws on the work of Richard Grove (1995), who explores how ideas about the recreation or rediscovery of paradise in an idyllic garden were combined with a growing discourse of islands. This combination resulted in “a situation in which the tropical environment was increasingly utilised as the symbolic location for the idealised landscapes and aspirations of the Western imagination” (Grove, 1995:3; see also Arnold, 2000; Gregory, 2001; Strachan, 2002). This in turn contributed to the emergence, as early as the 17th century, of references to “the legendary tropical islands in the West Indies” (Evelyn, n.d., cited in Grove, 1995:41), islands that were unspoiled and abundantly fruitful, where every need was supplied. Islands such as those in the Caribbean came to be depicted as utopias where individuals might find truth and self-justification (Grove, 1995). As new worlds, new Edens, they held the promise that on them humankind might recover its rightful relationship to nature as established, according to Christian belief, in the original Garden of Eden (Grove, 1995; Drayton, 2000).

These Christian beliefs about humanity’s place in nature did not prohibit the former’s intervention in the latter. Indeed, as Drayton (2000) points out, quoting from the book of Genesis, “the Lord God ... put [man] into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it,” (Genesis 2:15, The Bible, King James Version). When Adam was later exiled from the Garden his assigned lot became to “work the ground from whence he was taken” (Genesis 3:20, The Bible, King James Version; Drayton, 2000). These religious beliefs, along with the scientific developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

served to produce a European understanding of human-nature relationships characterized by human dominion and authority over nature (White, 1967; Drayton, 2000; Gregory, 2001), which found expression through the British enthusiasm for improvement (Grove, 1995; Drayton, 2000) and later for landscaping (Cosgrove, 2003). The statement, made in the 19th century, that in Dominica “skill and capital and labour have only to be brought to bear together, and the land might be a Garden of Eden” (Froude 1888:159) bears traces of both the passion for improving nature and the invocation of biblical themes.

The most obvious attempt to dominate and improve Caribbean nature was the establishment of plantations, in which the land was tamed and cultivated with the aim of maximizing productivity and profit. I address the practice of plantation agriculture in more detail in chapter 4, and so the discussion below is concerned instead with representational practices that were integral, though perhaps less conspicuous, aspects of the work of establishing and demonstrating sovereignty over nature in the Caribbean.

One such practice was the production of visual representations of the Caribbean landscape. Sheller (2003, 2007), Thompson (2006), Dian Kriz (2008) and Mohammed (2009) all examine the production of images of the pastoral Caribbean, particularly those from the 18th and early 19th centuries. The portrayal of Caribbean plantations as pastoral has been described as “perhaps the most compelling yet most problematic production of images about the Caribbean by largely European or European-trained artists” (Mohammed, 2009:173). Such portrayals were not limited to visual media: as Sheller (2003) points out, they can be found even in verbal descriptions of Caribbean nature, which often described the landscape as if it were a picture. Through these representations the land and its flora and fauna were made subject to civilizing colonial discipline, and were depicted as orderly havens for rich landowners, “cleansed by colonisation, now at peace with nature” (Mohammed 2009:176).

Not only do these portrayals of Caribbean landscapes suggest “a nearly obsessive concern with the control of ‘man’ over nature” (Dian Kriz, 2008:169), they also serve to erase or render benign the forced labour of African slaves that was necessary to maintain these visions of mastery over nature, of pastoral splendour on the plantations. In and through them, “the underbelly of slavery is camouflaged with a Christian pastoral mask” (Mohammed, 2009:78). Little wonder, then, that these representations of nature were put to ideological use, employed to support the anti-abolitionist agendas of West Indian planters (Strachan, 2002; Sheller, 2003; Mohammed, 2009). In such applications, “visible order in the landscape became to European eyes a justification of the colonising mission” (Cosgrove, 2003:264).

These colonial images of Caribbean nature represented the colonizers’ practices of dominating that nature via the plantation system. It is arguable also that the practice of making these representations of Caribbean landscapes was itself an act of domination. Denis Cosgrove writes that

landscape establishes a relationship of dominance and subordination between differently located viewer and object of visions... The vantage-point privileges the viewer of the landscape in selecting, framing, composing what is seen; in other words, the viewer exercises an imaginative power in turning material space into landscape (Cosgrove, 2003:254).

This being the case, “the ‘world-as-exhibition’ is structurally (not accidentally) implicated in the *general* operation of colonizing power: in the conquest of ‘world as picture’” (Gregory, 2001:93; see also Sheller, 2004). The imposition of European visual conventions and aesthetic values in the representations of these landscapes, even when these conventions are patently incongruous with the geographies being depicted (Dian Kriz, 2008; Mohammed, 2009), could be considered, in and of itself, an aspect of the colonial domination of Caribbean natures.

Having considered how depictions of a pastoral Caribbean were used to illustrate the successes of the British colonial endeavour, I turn to another representational practice that was of instrumental importance to the

settlement and exploitation of Caribbean lands: the practice of laying out the islands via surveys and maps (Dunn, 1973; Gregory, 2001; Mohammed, 2009).

Derek Gregory has drawn attention to how the practices of surveying and mapping were important components of the enterprise of domination, how

projects of ... topographical survey and cartography made visible a 'colonial order to things' by means of a thoroughgoing spatialisation of knowledge that brought various non-European natures within the sovereign grid of European scientific culture (2001:95).

This process of mapping and ordering was seen as essential to the successful incorporation of Caribbean lands into the colonial system, and to their profitable commercial exploitation; it was an important element of the colonial appropriation and commodification of nature. In the aftermath of the Seven Years War, as the British government sought to assert its dominion over several newly acquired territories in the Caribbean, it acted upon the recommendation that

...the commercial Advantages to be derived to this Kingdom from the speedy and effectual Settlement of your Majesty's Islands of Grenada, the Grenadines, Dominica, St. Vincents [*sic*], and Tobago, do in Our Humble Opinion materially depend upon the Division of them into convenient Districts, upon the laying out the Lands, which belong to Your Majesty, with Allotments proper for Plantations...(Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial), vol. IV, 1764, cited in Niddrie, 1966:67).

On this basis Dominica "was quickly subdivided into lots and as many as possible sold to new settlers in the usual way" (Niddrie, 1966:76). The survey and land settlement scheme carried out in Dominica and the other ceded islands was, according to Niddrie,

firmly based on sound land planning principles, contemporary 'colonial' precepts and practices. It was promptly executed, and apart from a few local frustrations, all four islands enjoyed a short period of rapid expansion (1966:77).

More recent histories of the British government's survey and settlement project challenge Niddrie's assessment of its soundness and the relative ease of its execution. Richard Grove details the strong and prolonged resistance by the indigenous inhabitants of St. Vincent to the survey and land redistribution process, and to a land proclamation that "made no provision whatsoever for Carib land interests and their mode of forest and land use" (Grove, 1995:287). Towards the end of the 19th century, officials in Grenada and St. Vincent complained of the absence of adequate surveys of the mountainous interiors of the respective islands (Richardson, 1997). In Dominica, the survey carried out by John Byres as a result of the Privy Council recommendation came to be seen as something of a farce: Honychurch reports that Byres' map, "though accurate in outline, ...gave no clue of what the rest of the island was like" (1995:63). Many of the settlers who acquired land in Dominica based on Byres' survey encountered unexpected difficulties, discovering that in the division of land for sale,

very little regard [had been] given to the lie of the land and many of the lots were on the side of precipitous slope and deep valleys. Most were almost impossible to get to on foot, let alone establish estates and transport goods (Honychurch, 1995:62).

There is clear evidence, then, that Caribbean natures were less than fully compliant with the intentions, representational and otherwise, of the colonizers. One might say that in some cases Caribbean natures resisted colonization and control.

3.2 Caribbean Tropicality

Such resistance gave rise to a different, more negative strand in the discourse about nature in the region, and in tropical regions in general; as Arnold (2000:9) points out, "the complex of ideas associated with the tropics was first assembled in the Caribbean, [but] it did not remain confined there". In these representations, the torrid zones of the West Indies were realms of "savagery and reeking putrefaction" (Carlyle, 1853), toxic landscapes (Dian

Kriz, 2008), plagued by “hellish climate, disorder, and [a] host of horrible diseases” (Dian Kriz, 2008:157; see also Curtin, 1989; Arnold, 2000; Gregory, 2001; Stepan, 2001; Strachan, 2002). The lush and fecund nature of the tropics, charming when it was first encountered, untamed, became vexatious when found to be, seemingly, untameable.

This latter discourse of tropical nature has been applied to Dominica, where depressed economic conditions in the early 20th century were often attributed, implicitly and explicitly, to its “natural environmental conditions” (Harrison, 1935:62), its terrain, and its abundance of primeval forest (Wood, 1922; Harrison, 1935; Honychurch, 1995). Recounting the story of a trip to Dominica in the middle of the 20th century, renowned travel writer Patrick Leigh Fermor depicted the island’s nature as wretched and slightly menacing. He tells of “trees [that] grew to an enormous height [creating] a dank and desolate tube of a pathway [where] everything dripped and rotted” (Fermor, 1950:124). Alec Waugh, who was fond of the island, nevertheless characterized Dominica as a melancholy place (Waugh, 1958); he wrote of the “fatal gift” of its beauty (Waugh, 1958:312; see also Ober, 1880:6) and the ‘problem’ of “its ruggedness, and dense vegetation . . . the rain, the mountains” (Waugh, 1958:294). “There is a Dominica legend in the Caribbean,” Waugh informed his readers: “‘everyone goes crazy there,’ they say. ‘All that rain and those mountains shutting them in and everything goes wrong’” (Waugh, 1958:283).

Such renderings of nature as overbearing, oppressive, and intractable are characteristic of what David Arnold (2000) refers to as the discourse of tropicity. In the case of Dominica, with its tall body and lofty peaks, the dismal depictions may also have been influenced by a historical English tendency to associate mountains with foreboding and savagery (Dunn, 1973). In general, if “the triumph of European modernity [was] in some substantial sense the triumph of ‘culture’ over ‘nature’” (Gregory, 2001:87), Europeans encountered in the tropics a nature that not only refused to be subjected to civilizing influence, but threatened to overpower culture entirely (Arnold, 2000; Gregory, 2001; Stepan, 2001; Strachan, 2002). This rather unsavoury

characterization of the tropics was perhaps most notoriously expressed by environmental determinists such as Semple (1911) and Huntington (1915), who posited that the natural conditions of the tropics were particularly inimical to civilization and even to individual human character. As they saw it, an extended stay in the tropics would make even thrifty and energetic European settlers indolent, enervated, self-indulgent, sickly and slack.

Representations of tropical nature as pestilential and pathological (Arnold, 2000; Gregory, 2001) contributed to an overall discourse of tropicity that established the alterity of nature in the tropics (Arnold, 2000; Gregory, 2001; Stepan, 2001). Already subject, as a tropical island in the Caribbean, to this discourse of otherness, Dominica began to find itself doubly othered when, in the early 20th century, British colonial reports began to emphasize its position as an aberration in the region. To illustrate: in 1897, Dominica was classed with and found comparable to other islands, namely Jamaica, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia (West India Royal Commission, 1897). By 1922, a description of Dominica as the most acutely depressed of Britain's Caribbean colonies was immediately, and hardly coincidentally, followed by an account of the physical peculiarities (rugged terrain, primeval forests, heavy rainfall) that were seen to make it "quite unlike any other British West Indian possessions" (Wood, 1922:50).

Constructs of tropical nature in the New World as radically other also served to normalize and confirm the superiority of familiar Old World natures (Gregory, 2001; Stepan, 2001). The imaginative geographies of tropicity that originated in the Caribbean functioned not only to produce durable ideas about the tropical nature of the Caribbean islands, but also to confirm the superiority of the supremely temperate nature of the European colonizing nations (Arnold, 2000; Stepan, 2001). The alterity of nature in the Caribbean helped to shape the colonizers' understanding of their own nature at home. Encounters with Caribbean nature have had other far-reaching impacts on Western orientations to and knowledges of nature, via influence on the evolution of the disciplines of natural history, botany and horticulture (Drayton, 2000; Stepan, 2001; Sheller, 2003; Dian Kriz, 2008) and the

development of modern environmental concern and conservationism (Grove, 1995).

In his book *Green imperialism: colonial expansion, tropical island Edens, and the origins of environmentalism*, Grove (1995) describes how observations of deforestation and its impacts in British Caribbean colonies were instrumental to the early development of conservation ideologies (see also Niddrie, 1966 and Richardson, 1997), and explains how the Caribbean served as testing grounds for these ideologies. He writes that

The available evidence shows that the seeds of modern conservationism developed as an integral part of the European encounter with the tropics and with local classification and interpretations of the natural world and its symbolism. As colonial expansion proceeded, the environmental experience of Europeans and indigenous peoples living at the colonial periphery played a steadily more dominant and dynamic part in the construction of new European evaluations of nature... (Grove, 1995:3)

Similarly, Drayton (2000) focuses on how the development of European natural history was influenced by encounters with new tropical natures. He suggests that

...what we may call the sciences of collection and comparison—among which we may include botany, zoology, anthropology, and geology—depended on Europeans becoming exposed to the planet's physical and organic diversity, and often to the scientific traditions of non-European people (Drayton, 2000:xiv-xv).

A criticism offered of Grove's work, and one that might also be levelled at Drayton's, is that residual traces of Eurocentrism are discernable in the lack of discussion of indigenous alternatives to and influences on metropolitan models of conservation, classification and nature knowledge (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010). For, as Mimi Sheller points out in her survey of the career of influential physician and naturalist Hans Sloane, Sloane's work and similar undertakings in the Caribbean were substantially dependent on "the local

knowledges of both aboriginal people and African slaves who passed on information on the specific medicinal uses of exotic plants unknown to Europeans” (Sheller, 2003:17). This being the case, the achievements arising from Sloane’s endeavours, including “contemporary systems of plant classification, medical botany, and life-saving pharmaceutical research ... can all be traced back to Jamaican origins, though this is seldom acknowledged” (Sheller, 2003:21). Sheller brings to light one of the ways in which the predominant Western systems of understanding and using nature have been influenced not only by Caribbean nature itself, but also by Caribbean knowledge of and relationships with that nature.

3.3 (Re)Discovery of the Caribbean Paradise

Returning to colonial representations of nature in the Caribbean, we find that the portrayal of unrestrained tropical nature as formidable and demoralizing was not the final word. Around the middle of the 19th century, there occurred another shift in representations: the Caribbean became paradise again. Its sublimely wild landscapes were portrayed as an adventure and attraction for travellers who were drawn by the belief that “nature in the tropics is always grand” (Froude, 1888:69), a belief that Froude held to be mistaken. It is in this period of renaturalization and romanticization (Sheller, 2003) that we see the emergence of the clearest antecedents of today’s popular touristic representations of the region, the familiar Caribbean picturesque (Sheller, 2003; Thompson, 2006; Mohammed, 2009). The renaturalization of the Caribbean landscape supported the fanciful notion that travellers to the Caribbean might experience the thrill of ‘discovering’ these tropical lands, in all their beauty and splendour, as if they were brand new (Strachan, 2002; Sheller, 2003; Mohammed, 2009).

In this reinvented Caribbean, it is not just Caribbean landscapes that are naturalized, but Caribbean people. They too are made picturesque, depicted and described as part of the scenery of the islands (Ballerino Cohen, 1995; Strachan, 2002; Sheller, 2003; Mohammed, 2009). Further to this, they are not

infrequently portrayed as “organically linked to the soil and sea” (Strachan, 2002:99) or as existing in a “primitive, natural, and Edenic state” (Strachan, 2002:100). They are portrayed as living lives of ease enabled by the exotic superabundance of the nature in which they live and of which they are a part (Strachan, 2002; Sheller, 2003; Thompson, 2006).

This latter is an iteration, though one invested with considerable charm, of the 19th century notion that the idleness and indolence of Caribbean people—in particular ex-slaves and their descendants—are facilitated by the region’s “rich climates” (Carlyle, 1853:5) and “inexhaustibly fertile” (Froude, 1888:49) soils. In such representations, nature in the Caribbean is so bountiful that very little effort is required for food production, thus enabling black islanders to lead lives of leisure, lazing around, as one author phrased it, “up to the ears in pumpkins” (Carlyle, 1853:5).

Portrayals of the Caribbean islands as tropical utopias, authentic and unspoiled, and inhabited by gentle amiable people, continue to provide the cornerstone of the region’s tourism narrative (Britton, 1979; Palmer, 1994; Ballerino Cohen, 1995; Echtner, 2002; Sheller, 2004; Pattullo, 2005; Daye, 2008). These depictions hark back to the original trope of the island paradise while also incorporating the genres of the pastoral and picturesque Caribbean (Strachan, 2002; Thompson, 2006; Mohammed, 2009). According to Strachan (2002:3-4), present-day touristic representations are indicative of the persistence of a discourse of the Caribbean that is “shaped by the controlling metaphors ‘paradise’ and ‘plantation’”. In Dominica, where the success of colonial plantations was tenuous at best, it is the metaphor of undiscovered paradise that prevails. The country’s tourism advertising is strongly reminiscent of 19th century illustrations of Caribbean adventure lands in which the figure of the intrepid metropolitan traveller is dwarfed by the richness and grandeur of the wild tropical nature in which he finds himself (Sheller, 2003 and 2004). Note the similarities, for example, between the two images (Figures 4 and 5) on the following page. Figure 4 is a plate from Charles Kingsley’s (1873) book *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies*—the text which popularized and codified this genre of tropical representation

(Sheller, 2003 and 2004)—and Figure 5 is a tourism ad published by the tourism authority of Dominica in 2006.



Figure 4: 'The High Woods', from *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies* (Kingsley, 1873, London: Macmillan & Co.). Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.

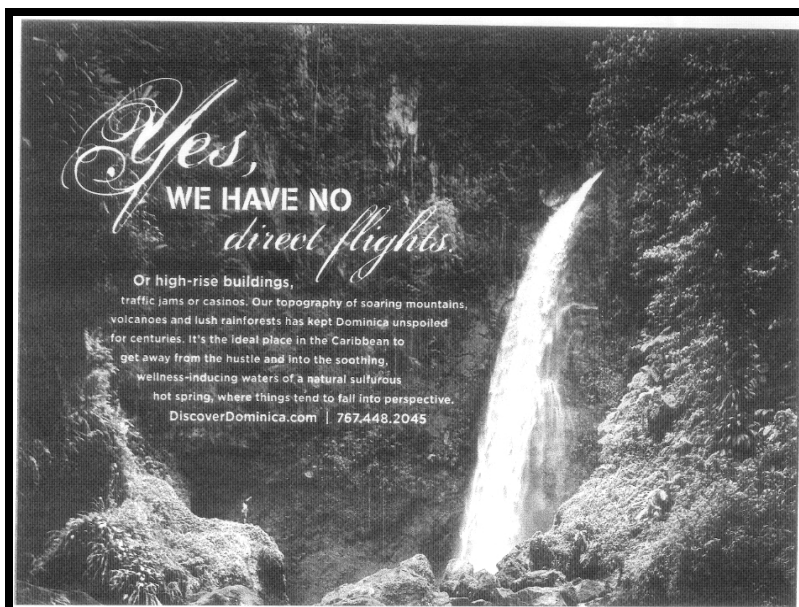


Figure 5: Discover Dominica tourism ad (Chronicle newspaper, Roseau, Dominica, November 3 2006)

On the tourism authority's website (www.dominica.dm, Discover Dominican Authority, 2011) notions of an originary Eden are invoked in the declaration that "the fiery creation forces are alive here" in "a paradise for the outdoor adventurer interested in unspoiled natural attractions", "an arcadia of unspoiled nature". Dominica is held out as being available for discovery, as the island "invites you to Explore!" Moreover, in keeping with the themes of its marketing, the tourism agency itself has been branded as the Discover Dominica Authority.

This example shows that an investigation of the history of colonial representations of Caribbean nature is not merely an academic expedition into the past. These representations have been formidable influences not just on the way the rest of the world sees the Caribbean, but also on the ways in which the Caribbean sees, knows and presents itself. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, old imaginative constructs of tropical Caribbean nature continue to echo and resonate in Dominica today.

3.4 Caribbean Perceptions of Caribbean Nature

Having addressed at some length Western constructions and representations of nature in the Caribbean, I now turn to a review of the scholarship on local attitudes and relationships to nature in the Caribbean, work that could be considered a more direct predecessor to my own.

There is a substantial body of research in the field of Caribbean studies (Lowenthal, 1961; Mintz, 1974; Besson and Momsen, 1997, 2007) that looks at the issues of land and its significance in Caribbean societies. More recently researchers have been paying attention to Caribbean perceptions of and attitudes towards the environment, and have in some cases, as Jaffe (2006) points out, made connections between attitudes to the environment and attitudes to land.

Although few of the authors writing on the latter topics have sought to explain what they mean by 'land', it seems that the prevailing understanding is that of land as "ground or territory as owned by a person or viewed as public or private property; landed property" ('land', OED Online, def. 4a), often with a focus of the rural and the agricultural—"the country as opposed to the town" ('land', OED Online, def. 5) and "an area of ground under cultivation" ('land', OED Online, def. 4d). So while I wish to avoid creating an impression of equivalency between nature and land (or nature and environment), it would be inaccurate and unreasonable to insist that the concepts and the material realities they represent are entirely discrete and mutually exclusive domains¹. People's activities on and engagements with land are likely to be important contributors to their relationships with nature. Consequently, in investigating Caribbean attitudes to nature, it would be useful to consider Caribbean attitudes to land and to relationships between people and the land.

An early study on the subject of Caribbean relations to land, and one that set the tone for much of the research to follow, is David Lowenthal's 1961 article on 'Caribbean views of Caribbean land'. In this essay Lowenthal challenged the then prevalent ideas that Caribbean people were not particularly attached to their homelands and therefore saw land primarily as a commodity. He presented an alternative perspective, one that is now largely conventional wisdom: that Caribbean people have a "deeply felt attachment to the land that transcends the realm of economics" (Lowenthal, 1961:4). In addition to being highly influential, Lowenthal's essay is remarkable in that it gave Caribbean relationships to land a multi-dimensional treatment that is not as evident in much of the work that succeeded it.

¹ I suggest that one distinction between land and nature in the Caribbean context could be thought of as follows: as V. S. Naipaul writes and as many of the researchers on the topic also indicate, "land is not land alone, something that simply is itself ... land partakes of what we breathe into it, is touched by moods and memories" (Naipaul, 1987:301); in contrast, one of the defining characteristics of nature, at least as it is commonly understood in Dominica, is that it *is* "something that simply is itself". Of this, more later in chapter 7.

Focusing specifically on the British West Indian territories (in 1961, Britain had not yet granted full independence to any of its Caribbean colonies), Lowenthal observed that for Caribbean people land signifies freedom, self-determination, family and community solidarity, and serves as an important focus for debates concerning national identity and sovereignty. Lowenthal accorded favourable consideration to peasant productive uses of the land, but also paid attention to the ways in which Caribbean people use lands—beaches, wetlands, mountains—for leisure and recreation. He was also mindful of Caribbean people's aesthetic appreciation, particularly as expressed by the region's wordsmiths, of the varied beauty of local places and landscapes.

Several scholars have followed in Lowenthal's footsteps with detailed investigations into "'cultures of land in the Caribbean' and the ways in which land is part and parcel of Caribbean ... people's lives" (Skelton, 1996:75). A key work in this regard is the landmark text *Land and Development in the Caribbean* (Besson and Momsen, 1987). This volume, which focused on "the interrelationships of land tenure, attitudes to land and agricultural production in the Commonwealth Caribbean" (Besson and Momsen, 1987:1), highlighted the symbolic, cultural and ideological values attached to land in the Caribbean, and considered how these values affect the use (and voluntary non-use) of land. In compiling the collection, the editors sought to challenge what they saw as outsider, Eurocentric perspectives on land use and development in the region, and to focus attention on local folk practices and perceptions (Besson and Momsen, 1987).

In Besson and Momsen's collection and elsewhere, a substantial portion of the research about Caribbean arrangements of land use and land tenure identifies peasant proprietorship as a response and resistance to the colonial plantation system of agriculture (Mintz, 1974; Besson, 1987; Momsen, 1987; Trouillot, 1988; Pulsipher, 1990; Thomasson, 1994; Richardson, 1997; Besson 2007, Chivallon, 2007). Researchers have discussed the social, economic and cultural significance of peasant gardens (Mintz, 1974; Trouillot, 1988; Richardson, 1997; Green, 1999; Honychurch, 2001; Chivallon, 2007), some

using approaches that involve close attention to the actual practices of cultivation (Kimber, 1973; Berleant-Schiller and Pulsipher, 1986; Brierley, 1987; Pulsipher, 1990; Brierley, 1991; Thomasson, 1994; Westmacott, 2001).

Twenty years after the publication of *Land and Development in the Caribbean*, a follow-up volume, *Caribbean Land and Development Revisited* (Besson and Momsen, 2007) was produced. Comparison of the two collections, and of the themes and treatments included in each, reveals how scholarship and discourse on land—and thus nature, to the extent that the two concepts intersect and overlap—in the Caribbean have evolved and expanded.

In the newer text more attention is given to tourism development and its direct and indirect impacts on the control, use and quality of land (and sea) in the Caribbean. Pugh (2007), Macleod (2007), Skinner (2007) and Mills (2007) all addressed the topic of how tourism has transformed island taskscapes (Skinner, 2007), threatening traditional practices of farming and fishing, and affecting the standing of land and sea as sources of individual, family and community identity.

Caribbean Land and Development Revisited also includes more work in a distinctly postcolonial vein than did its predecessor. Richardson, Grossman, Chivallon, and Sheller (all 2007) present critical interrogations and reappraisals of colonial policies, practices and propositions in respect of Caribbean lands and their management.

Additionally, in the new volume land is increasingly treated as the object of technical, scientific and institutional governance, a treatment that is linked to the greater prominence of an ecological perspective and a conservation agenda. This is most explicit in references to “efficiency and effectiveness in ... land management” (Stanfield and Wijetunga, 2007:91), and to sustainable land management that involves

a broader integrative view [including] natural resources, such as soils, minerals, water and biota . . . organized in ecosystems to provide a variety of environmental services essential to the maintenance of

the integrity of life-support systems and the productive capacity of the environment (Miller and Barker, 2007:119)

It is also evident in the way authors write, not about mixed crops, subsistence gardens and peasant farming (Brierley, 1987; Innes, 1987; Berleant-Schiller and Pulsipher, 1986; Pulsipher, 1990), but of agrobiodiversity, agroecosystems and agromanagement (Spence and Thomas-Hope, 2007).

Research about Caribbean people's attitudes to the environment, or about their role in the management of some identified natural resource, is often grounded in the ecological perspective, reflecting the global spread of environmentalist discourse and the associated emphases on conservation and sustainable development. Investigations of Caribbean perceptions of the environment often involve surveys of people's levels of environmental concern or of their perceptions of environmental quality (Momsen, 2000; Bailey, 2003; Dodman, 2004); assessments of public attitudes to protected natural areas (West and Carrier, 2004; Stern, 2008; Eadens et al., 2009); and analyses of community awareness of, involvement in, or exclusion from the management of natural areas or natural resources (Dixon et al., 1993; Christian et al., 1994; Christian et al., 1996; Haley and Clayton, 2003; Pomeroy et al., 2004).

A common characteristic of studies such as those referred to in the previous paragraph is that they are generally grounded in an environmental realist view that equates nature with the objectively observable phenomena of the natural environment. Such an assumption leaves little room for exploration of broader local understandings of what nature means, what nature is and how nature operates, or for consideration of how these understandings might influence attitudes and behaviour towards the environment.

So while there is an abundance of literature about the management of Caribbean environments, there are fewer instances of academic work on Caribbean people's understandings of nature (Jaffe, 2006). Jaffe's 2006 and

2008 papers on the environmental worldviews of urban citizens in Curaçao and Jamaica are some of the most recently published studies in this regard. In her research, Jaffe enquired into attitudes about wild nature and environmental problems, as expressed by residents of four urban communities, two in Curaçao and two in Jamaica. She surveyed people's perceptions of the materiality of nature and the environment, but also examined what she refers to as "folk ecologies" (Jaffe, 2006:228), people's "general beliefs about the Earth and human-environment relationships" (Stern et al., 1995:738 cited in Jaffe, 2006:228).

Jaffe found several points of commonality between the environmental worldviews prevalent in all four communities on both islands. Common ideas about nature were that it is limitless in its abundance; that it exists primarily to be put to (prudent) use by human beings; that human beings are part of nature, but occupy a higher status in the natural realm than do plants and non-human animals; that nature is "unalterable, uncontrollable and indestructible" (Jaffe, 2006:230).

Overall, Jaffe (2006:234) concluded that while "in certain respects, [Caribbean] perceptions parallel the western concept of environmental consciousness", there are some significant differences between Caribbean understandings of nature and western environmental beliefs. In the Western paradigm, according to Jaffe, it is assumed that environmental consciousness involves recognition that there are limits to growth, and rejection of anthropocentrism and human exemptionalism. Caribbean worldviews, however,

place a strong emphasis on the instrumental value of natural resources; the concept of a limit to growth is largely absent; and humans are seen as possessing a God-given right to dominion of the earth. Relations between humans, nature, and God/Jah are articulated in worldviews characterized by a combination of misanthropy, anthropocentrism, and animism. Western academic and policy discourses on environmentalism do not generally intertwine religious and environmental beliefs in such a way (Jaffe, 2006:234).

In Jaffe's view, these aspects of Caribbean environmental thought are dismissed and disparaged by the rational-technical 'professional' or 'expert' versions of environmentalism, which reflect Western notions of environmental consciousness and are "based strongly on scientific fact or consensus, such as measurable ecosystem degradation or pollution levels and established causal patterns in human and nature interactions" (Jaffe, 2006:235).

As Jaffe points out, people's emic understandings of nature and their environment ought to be taken seriously. They not only "have important implications for environmental management and policy" (Jaffe, 2006:221); they also contribute towards our understandings of people, their societies and their cultures.

3.5 Caribbean Nature in Caribbean Literature

An illuminating body of literature to consider when contemplating Caribbean people and their relationships to Caribbean nature is the work of the region's novelists, poets, playwrights and essayists. Lowenthal (1961:6) reported that in Caribbean prose and poetry "the landscapes characteristic of particular islands are celebrated. Each has its unique pictorial and emotional quality..." But Caribbean writers do more than just depict and celebrate the picturesque qualities of Caribbean landscapes. In their art they explore ideas about nature in ways that frequently challenge conventional ideas and myths about nature in the Caribbean. To demonstrate this I present below several excerpts from the work of Caribbean authors; this selection should be seen as illustrative rather than representative.

Guyanese author Wilson Harris (who was a land surveyor before he embarked on his literary career) has challenged the idea that nature is an inactive recipient of human agency. He wrote:

It seems to me that, for a long time, landscapes and riverscapes have been perceived as passive, as

furniture, as areas to be manipulated; whereas, I sensed, over the years, as a surveyor, that the landscape possessed resonance. The landscape possessed a life, because, the landscape, for me, is like an open book and the alphabet with which one worked was all around me. But it takes some time to really grasp what this alphabet is, and what the book of the living landscape is (Harris, 1999:40).

Barbadian poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite has also concerned himself with finding and expressing the language of landscape; Stewart Brown writes of Brathwaite's efforts to "remember/re-imagine a language that knows the lime-stone caves of Barbados, the waterfalls of Guyana, the cliffs of Dominica and the cockpit crevices of Jamaica" (Brown, 2004:xx). Brathwaite himself has explained how he has tried, "to celebrate our Bajan landscape/manscape & the way we walk&talk it" (Brathwaite, 1994 cited in Brathwaite et al., 2008), and has spoken about how his poetry has been influenced by the rhythms of the Caribbean sea beside which he grew up (Brown, 2004).

In quite a different way, V. S. Naipaul, originally from Trinidad and Tobago, also calls attention to Caribbean seascapes, or rather beach-scapes:

The beaches of which they were so proud, almost as of a personal possession, might have given them an idea of the beginning of [this spiritual emptiness in which they lived]. If they could have looked at those beaches in another way they might have seen the past in a simple picture: New World Islands scraped clean of the aborigines Columbus and his successors saw (Naipaul, 2007:23).

Furthermore, Naipaul is quite firmly determined to rebuff ideas of idyllic tropical nature in the West Indies:

The slogan on the label for Trinidad Grapefruit Juice, when I was a child, was 'Fruit Ripened in Tropical Sunshine'. I had always thought that the words were too pretty. 'Fruit Ripened in Hot Sun' would have been truer to the climate I lived in, but they might have been less of a slogan. 'Tropical Sunshine'—they were tourist words, I always thought, and indeed they could have little meaning for someone who had known nothing else (Naipaul, 1990:180).

Whereas Naipaul undermines the notion of the Edenic, picturesque, “too pretty” Caribbean, Derek Walcott, from the island of St. Lucia, takes a different stance. He celebrates the region’s natural beauty, even suggesting that “the beauty of the Caribbean islands could have helped the slave survive” (Walcott, 2000:61 cited in DeLoughrey et al., 2005b:9). But he too offers a critique of the touristic representations of the Caribbean’s beauty: they are too facile, too superficial:

The Caribbean is extremely photogenic, but nothing photogenic lasts in the sense of the depth of what is registered. ... But what happens to the landscape that you look at through the eyes of someone who has written lovingly about it? It becomes a totally different thing. So that if you are looking at the landscape in Trinidad of the Indian villages and you think of [Samuel] Selvon, then something is illuminated there... And so there’s another dimension that happens because of art... (Walcott and Handley, 2005:136)

The ability of art to extend the range of ideas about Caribbean landscapes and relations to those landscapes is particularly vital in light of discourses in which both Caribbean nature and Caribbean culture are represented as primitive:

[Those] who see this climate as seasonless and without subtlety also see us as a race without temperament, therefore without any possibility of art. ... That yearlong sun, that either bright blue or slate-colored sea, that idiot green of everything can only produce heraldic totemic art with bright edges. No philosophy. No complexity. ... “The natural graces of life do not show themselves under such conditions.” This is Froude, of course, but there are moments when every islander believes it (Walcott, 2005:55-57).

In another passage from the essay quoted immediately above, Walcott discusses the ways in which the imposition of European botanical knowledge on Caribbean natures is an exercise in power. I quote Walcott on this topic at length in chapter 5, so here I present instead the words of Jamaica Kincaid, who was born and raised in Antigua, on the same theme, the (re-)naming of Caribbean plants by European botanists:

“The Oxford Companion to Gardens” (a book I often want to hurl across the room, it is so full of prejudice) describes Linnaeus as “enraptured” with seeing all these plants from far away, because his native Sweden did not have anything like them, but most likely what happened was that he saw an opportunity, and it was this: These countries in Europe share the same botany, more or less, but each place called the same thing by a different name; and these people who make up Europe were (are) so contentious anyway, they would not have agreed to one system for all the plants they had in common, but these new plants from far away, like the people far away, had no history, no names, and so they could be given names. And who was there to dispute Linnaeus, even if there was someone who would listen? (Kincaid, 1992:159)

Indeed, Kincaid’s series of gardening articles for *The New Yorker*—later collected as a book (Kincaid, 2001)—abounds with lucid observations and trenchant critiques of how nature was an essential element of European colonial enterprise in the Caribbean and other conquered lands. She addresses herself to several of the themes that were later to be addressed by scholars such as Drayton (2000), Gregory (2001), Sheller (2003) and Mohammed (2009).

As I bring this chapter to a close, I present an excerpt from the work of an author from Dominica. In Jean Rhys’ novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, set in the 1830s, an Englishman finds himself honeymooning in Dominica with his Caribbean-born wife. He finds the island’s nature to be “wild”, “menacing”, “extreme”, “too much”, “alien”—one sees here clear indications of the discourses of alterity and tropicality. The following exchange takes place between husband and wife, with the husband speaking first:

“Well,” I answered, annoyed, “that is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream.”

“But how can rivers and mountains and the sea be unreal?”

“And how can millions of people, their houses and their streets be unreal?”

“More easily,” she said, “much more easily. . . ” (Rhys, 1993[1966]: 67).

Here, Rhys—who wrote that in her depiction of Dominica she “tried to put some of the love of the place where I was born” (Rhys to Diana Athill, 1966)—unsettles the established relationship between the cultured metropole and the wild Caribbean periphery. She subverts the worldview in which the metropole is positioned as the norm and the Caribbean as the radical other, and disturbs the notion of the Caribbean, and nature in the Caribbean, as a marginal imaginary space, somehow less real or substantial than the European town and suburbs.

It is evident from these few examples that Caribbean thinkers and writers are, and have been for some time, diversely articulating the ways in which Caribbean nature is intimately connected to the history, culture and identity of the region and its peoples, and to the relationships between the region and the wider world. The editors of the ecocriticism collection *Caribbean Literature and the Environment* (DeLoughrey et al., 2005b) take the observations of Martinican scholar Édouard Glissant as a starting point for their discussion of “the language of landscape” (Glissant, 1999:149 cited in DeLoughrey et al., 2005a:2) in Caribbean literature and its treatment of the relationships between people and place, nature and culture, human history and natural history. For my part, I will use Glissant’s words as a coda to this chapter:

Describing the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history. Landscape is a character in this process. Its deepest meanings need to be understood (Glissant, 1999:105-6 cited in DeLoughrey et al., 2005a:4).

4 Historical Representations of Nature Relations in Dominica

In this chapter I look at how European invaders, settlers, colonial administrators and visitors represented non-European people's relationships with nature in Dominica. My overall claim is that the colonizers misrepresented these relationships—portraying them as careless and lackadaisical—in ways that served their interests and helped to justify their conquest and domination of the island. I illustrate this by examining, first, changing accounts of the Kalinago in the two centuries after European encounter and, second, discourses concerning the black Dominican peasantry in the 100 years or so after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire.

4.1 Kalinago Natures

In the northeast of Dominica is a place called the Carib Reserve. This is where we Carib people live.

...Our family has always lived here. This is our land so long as we are the people using it. We have the right to build our houses and plant our gardens here. If anyone else wants to use a piece of this land, he must ask our permission. Unless we had other plans, we would not refuse. Our land is very hilly, but we love it very much, so we live happily together.

(Faustulus Frederick with Elizabeth Shepherd, 1979:33)

Previous academic work (Cronon, 1983; Denevan, 1992; Cronon, 1996; O'Neill, 2008) has refuted the notion that the landscapes of the Americas were, as often depicted, pristine and untouched prior to the arrival of European colonizers. The lands that have been portrayed as virgin, undisturbed and in their original state were actually humanized landscapes that had been modified and managed over centuries of human habitation. William Cronon (1983) has examined how early European settlers depicted

the relationships that new world people had with their environments: the settlers portrayed native American people's use of the land and its abundant resources as poor and inefficient (Cronon, 1983; Boucher, 2008). These portrayals were not reflective of reality; rather they were "testimony to how little [the settlers] understood both the [new world] environment and the ways Indians actually lived in it" (Cronon, 1983:47). This lack of understanding, and the settlers' tendency to judge the Americans' way of life according to European values, had political consequences, as the Amerindians' seemingly wasteful and irrational use of the land was used to help justify its expropriation by European colonizers (Locke, 1690; Cronon, 1983; Tully, 1993; Arneil, 1996; O'Neill, 2008).

In this chapter, I discuss changing European representations of Kalinago relationships with nature in Dominica, and consider how these representations may have been used to legitimize European settlement and conquest.² I also point out how discourses operating locally in Dominica today can efface, not only the Kalinago's historical presence in the Dominican landscape, but also their place in Dominica's history.

The Kalinago people who came to Dominica were the last of several successive waves of settlers who moved northwards from South America up the Caribbean archipelago, travelling in large dugout canoes from the mainland (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). Archaeological research in Dominica has identified several locations that show evidence of pre-Columbian settlement by Kalinago and their predecessors. These reveal, according to Honychurch (1995), certain preferences based on access to food and other resources. Coastal settlements were generally found at the mouths of rivers or beside sheltered bays where canoes could be beached. Fewer inland sites have been identified, but these are also usually located close to rivers. Upland sites likely offered good viewing points from which unwelcome visitors to the island might be spotted easily and early. Coastal

² The source for many of the European descriptions of the Kalinago in this chapter is Hulme and Whitehead's 1992 anthology *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day*.

headlands would have been good locations for fishing, while valleys would have provided access to the rainforest and the resources—wood, textiles, medicine, food, prey—to be found therein. Overall, Honychurch paints a picture of a people “acutely attuned to the ecology around them for their means of survival” (1995:14), making skilful use of the resources provided to them by the tall-bodied island, Waitukubuli. He suggests too that the first Kalinago chose to settle on Dominica and other of the “moist, mountainous, larger Windward islands” (Honychurch, 1995:24) because the landscapes of these islands were most like those they had left behind in South America, thus making it easier for them to “replicate[] mainland social structures and subsistence strategies” (Baker, 1994:18).

These early inhabitants did not limit themselves to Waitukubuli. They routinely farmed and fished in and around neighbouring islands, including those now known as Guadeloupe and Marie Galante (Honychurch, 1995). As expert seamen, they travelled regularly for purposes of trading and raiding along the Antillean chain, reaching as far as the island of Puerto Rico, nearly 400 miles away (Baker, 1994; Boucher, 2008). This “uninhibited movement” (Honychurch, 1995:15) continued for years after the establishment of European colonies in the region.

Dominica was first sighted by Columbus on Sunday, November 3, 1493, during his second voyage to the Caribbean (see Figure 6 for a depiction of the first encounter between the Europeans and the Kalinago of Dominica). The ship’s surgeon, Diego Chanca described the island thus:

...a high and mountainous land on the side we saw ...
as much of the island as was in sight was very beautiful
and very green mountains, right down to the water,
which was a delight to see, since in our own country at
that season there is scarcely any green (The Report of
Dr. Chanca, 1494, cited in Hulme and Whitehead,
1992:30).

From Chanca, we learn that inhabitants of neighbouring islands represented Dominica’s Kalinago (whom they called *caribes*, hence Caribs) as fierce and aggressive seafarers who were accustomed to travelling as many as “150

leagues by sea to make raids in the many canoes which they have” (Chanca, 1494, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:34).



Figure 6: Mural depicting Kalinago-European encounter, Carib Territory (photo by author)

More detailed accounts of the people of Dominica and the ways in which they interacted with their environment emerged in the mid to late 16th century, when the island came to be used as a wood and water station for European vessels. Sailors who landed on Dominica reported being plied with an abundance of goods, including pineapples, tobacco, cassava and cassava bread, potatoes, plantains, poultry, game birds, iguanas and turtles. These were traded for items such as knives, hatchets and other sundries (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Baker, 1994). In 1595, Sir Francis Drake landed on Marie Galante, where he

“by chance met a Canoa of Dominicans ... and they gave him such fruits as they had, and the Dominicans

rowed to Dominica againe ... to fetch some fruits which they sowe and plant in divers places of that Island, which they keepe like gardens" (Hawkins, 1595, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:56).

The Kalinago were very defensive of their gardens, which were mostly kept inland. It seems that their willingness to trade freely with Europeans on the shore (or preferably slightly offshore), bringing them food and water, was a tactic to keep the visitors away from their cultivation grounds and villages. When certain French sailors "more undiscreeete went and gathered their *Ananas* in the Indians [*sic*] gardens, trampling through them without any discretion" (Laudonnière, 1564 cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:52), they found themselves violently set upon by the previously accommodating Kalinago. Another account, from 1598, suggests that the Kalinago used other more passive strategies to deter European adventurers: a ship's chaplain wrote that although the island appeared from a distance to be impenetrably woody (Layfield, 1598 cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992), it had been reported by other travellers that the Kalinago had cleared numerous passages in the interior. He therefore thought it likely that the island's inaccessible appearance was intentionally maintained: "it [*is*] probable that they leave those skirts and edges of their Countrie thus of purpose for a wall of defence" (Layfield, 1598 cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:59).

In 1605 a group of 67 Englishmen were abandoned in St. Lucia, where they lived for a time with the people of the island. In the story of their sojourn there, we find descriptions of Kalinago gardens. Although these accounts are not from Dominica, it is likely that cultivation practices in Dominican were similar, particularly given that the Kalinago of the Lesser Antilles were still at this time accustomed to moving relatively freely between islands (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). On St. Lucia, the Englishmen found

...a most pleasant Garden of Potatoes, which drove us into greate admiration to beholde the manner of it, for it was made round like a Bower, encompassed with a greene Banke, so equally, that made us thinke some Christians had made it... Wee traveyled two or three

miles further, passing through many goodly gardens, wherein was abundance of Cassada, Potatoes, Tobacco, Cotton-wool-trees, and Guiava trees...(Nicholl, 1607 cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:71-72)

We learn from Nicholl's account that Kalinago gardens were sited in well manicured and maintained clearings, hidden in the forest, carefully enclosed by tall trees and connected by ingenious networks of paths and trails. Other early accounts (Laudonniere, 1564; Drake, 1585; Clifford, 16th c., all cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992) tell that the Kalinago had incorporated European-introduced plants, such as sugar-cane and plantain, into their agriculture. In addition to cultivating food crops, the inhabitants of Dominica also hunted in the forests and at sea, harvested timber and forest products to construct their houses and canoes, gathered plants and herbs to produce medicines and decorate their bodies, and grew cotton to make their hammocks (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Honychurch, 1995).

We have then, from 16th century reports, a picture of Dominica as an island which, though it might appear "full of woodes and bushes" (Frobisher, 1585, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:54) and "al overgrown with woods" (Davie, 1595, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:56), was clearly inhabited and cultivated, not just in a small area, but in diverse places, including the inland regions. The Kalinago of Dominica were portrayed as skilled, strategic and adaptable practitioners of the nature of their island, using its resources so productively that they were able to provide European travellers with all manner of goods and produce. They not only defended their home and their interests against invaders, but also aggressively established, through trading and raiding, a network that extended through the Lesser Antilles and infringed upon early Spanish settlements, from which both Europeans and Africans were captured by the Kalinago and spirited off to Dominica (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995).

At the same time the Kalinago were not averse to adopting foreign ways; not only did they integrate introduced crops into their agriculture, but accounts from the period show that they were also interested in learning European

vocabulary, and incorporated it into their language (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Baker, 1994). As the European incursion into the region grew, and the indigenous people were eliminated from one island after another, Dominica became the one of the Kalinagos' last strategic strongholds, "a base of operations for much of the Carib aggression in the region" (Baker, 1994:25) and "the island, more than any other, that the Carib could at one time call their own" (Luke, 1950: 125 cited in Baker, 1994:25).

Things in the region were changing inexorably. The Caribbean islands were increasingly subject to the colonizing efforts of the French, English and Dutch, as well as those of the Spanish, and the invading Europeans usurped and appropriated the islands that had once been part of the Kalinago domain. By the early 17th century, the Kalinago had begun to lose their grip on the islands of the Lesser Antilles and were "transformed ... from an offensive vanguard into a defensive heterogeneous remnant" (Baker, 1994:25). In addition to retreating to Dominica, the Kalinago also found themselves forced to retreat *in* Dominica; it was at this time that they began the relocation to the island's craggy windward coast, which was difficult for Europeans to access by land and almost impossible for them to access by sea (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995).

Many of the accounts of the Kalinago of Dominica from this period were produced by French missionaries. Previously, Europeans had encountered Dominica rather transiently and were, it seems, largely content to leave the island and its formidable terrain to the indigenous inhabitants. By the 1600s the French, who had established colonies on Guadeloupe (to the north of Dominica) and Martinique (to the south), were very much interested in making a permanent settlement in Dominica. The strategy of missionary outreach and conversion was a means to this end. It seems hardly a coincidence that, as Hulme and Whitehead point out, the missionaries' descriptions of the Kalinago "tend to disparage native belief systems and question their capacity for constructing an effective social order" (Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:81). In several ways, the French missionaries' descriptions of Dominica's Kalinago are incompatible with those presented by the

Spanish and English in the preceding century. I wish to draw attention to a particular feature of these accounts, which is the disparagement of the Kalinago's ability to make competent use of the abundant nature with which they are surrounded.

For instance, reports attributed to Father Raymond Breton say of the Kalinago that

They are extremely idle and prefer to have the poorest fare and to work less. They scarcely think of the morrow and make no other provision than of manioc and sweet potatoes that they plant in season. Yet rather often they find themselves short. ...I do not think that there could be a nation in the rest of the world that would make more meagre fare than this one, although it has the means to maintain itself well (Breton, 1647, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:110, 111).

Approximately 20 years later, Jean Baptiste du Tertre portrayed the Kalinago as living in an idyllic state, "just as nature brought them forth, that is to say with great simplicity and natural naïvety" (du Tertre, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:129) in their "little paradise, always verdant" (du Tertre, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:129). They were depicted as generally uninterested in productive work, "preferring to get by with little than to buy the pleasure of a good meal with too much labour" (du Tertre, 1667, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:129). These French ethnographers thought little of the Kalinago's practices of hunting, fishing, farming, or even of the arduous task of carving a canoe from a *gommyé* tree; they describe these tasks as being undertaken in a laconic, haphazard and negligent fashion (Labat, 1722 cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:155).

Descriptions such as these are in considerable contrast to those provided by early European voyagers. In the earlier descriptions the Kalinago were represented as making provision in such abundance that they were able to trade liberally with passing ships, and Chanca wrote that they "seemed more civilised than those elsewhere ... [they] have larger stocks of provisions, and show more signs of industry" (Chanca, 16c., cited in Honychurch, 1995:22).

Certainly the Kalinagos' circumstances had been much reduced in the period between first contact and early French settlement, but a sea change from a culture of assiduous farming, fishing and manufacture to one of extreme idleness and inveterate laziness is questionable.

Furthermore, representations of the Kalinago as unwilling to use the bounty available to maintain themselves well seem at odds with descriptions from the same period, and sometimes from the same chroniclers, of large community repasts including cassava, pineapples, bananas, figs, sugar cane, fish, seafood, pepper, poultry and game birds. Neither can they be easily reconciled with descriptions of their trade with the Europeans, to which they brought "cotton beds, turtles, pigs, lizards, fish, hens, parrots, local fruits, bows, arrows, small baskets" (du Tertre 1667, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:131). All of these commodities would have been obtained or produced from Dominica's forests, rivers and seas, and some of them—poultry and livestock, for example—were not even used by the Kalinago themselves, but kept specifically for trading purposes (Breton, 1647, cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992; Boucher, 2008). European settlers benefited from Kalinago knowledge of nature in other ways as well. Richard Dunn has told that when the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis were hit by hurricanes "in 1657, 1658, 1660, 1665, and 1667 ... every time the Caribs on Dominica and St. Vincent sent a warning [to the English settlers] ten or twelve days in advance" (Dunn, 1973:42). The settlers were less than grateful, however, and even went so far as to blame the heathen Kalinago for attracting the wrath of God, in the form of the storm, in the first place (Dunn, 1973).

Boucher (2008:35) suggests that French authors such as Labat and du Tertre were "well-meaning but naïve", and that they were genuinely unaware of the amount of skilled, diligent, and even hazardous, labour that was involved in sustaining the Kalinago way of life. Additionally, he proposes that the French missionaries likely saw hunting and fishing as leisure activities, so that when the Kalinago engaged in these practices it was seen as evidence for, rather than against, their general shiftlessness and insouciance. I propose that it was in the interest of the colonizing and 'civilizing' project,

of which the missionaries were an integral part, to represent the Kalinago as existing in a state of nature, rather than one of culture and social organization. As such, their portrayal of the Kalinago relationship to nature as indifferent, rather than industrious, was an integral part of a logic constructed to support the claim that ‘the Savages’ (noble though they might be) were in dire need of the improvement that French colonization would provide. There is more to this misrepresentation of the Kalinago than simple misunderstanding.

In the introduction to *The Dominica Story*, Lennox Honychurch writes that “[Dominica’s] environment gave the early Caribs a natural fortress against the European settlers and kept Dominican uncolonised for a longer period than other islands” (Honychurch, 1995:ix). In this depiction, it is nature in Dominica that is given the active role and the Kalinago seem to be the relatively passive, defensive recipients of the island’s protection. Such a representation hardly does credit to the people who robustly sustained their society on Dominica for nearly two centuries after first contact with the Europeans, and who persistently harried—and not infrequently got the better of—European colonists on other islands in the region. To be fair to Honychurch, he does, in the second and third chapters of his book, describe Kalinago society and the Kalinagos’ fierce defence of Dominica and neighbouring islands. However, the narrative of the Kalinago as the passive recipients of nature’s beneficence persists in Dominica. When I spoke to Dominicans about the island’s status as the nature island of the Caribbean, I was often told that Dominica, unlike other territories that were more easily colonized, remained untouched by Europeans for so long because the island defended itself or because nature in Dominica protected itself (that is, not because the Kalinago had defended their island). On occasion, people expressed the opinion that nature had not only defended or protected the island itself against invasion, but that it had also protected the Kalinago.

Not surprisingly, the Kalinago people that I spoke to had quite a different perspective on the matter. Garnette Joseph, the incumbent Carib Chief, in

response to my question about what it meant for Dominica to be called the nature island of the Caribbean, had this to say:

Well, I guess it's different minds, how they see the country. I think for the Kalinago people it's nothing to be excited about because others can make, the Afro-Dominicans can make the claim because of what the Kalinago did for Dominica. And this is not always recognized, because had the Kalinago people not defended the island for 200 years, keeping out colonization, I think the island would be in a lot worse state. And this claim... I think other persons can make this claim because of what the Kalinago people did. And to have serious consideration given to that effort and to introducing other, you know, other means of survival.

He was also of the opinion that representations of Dominica's nature, particularly the rainforests of the interior, as untouched and pristine tended to overlook the way the Kalinago would have "[lived] on the island, [made] use of the land, they [lived] off the land, naturally they would have [had] access to the entire island". If anything, he added, the fact that Dominica's forests remained largely intact after centuries of Kalinago habitation was because Kalinago use of Dominica's natural resources was respectful and low-impact.

A useful interjection at this point might be provided by the following extract from Denevan's (1992) work on the 'pristine myth' of the pre-Columbian landscape of the Americas:

...the Indian impact was neither benign nor localized and ephemeral, nor were resources always used in a sound ecological way. The concern here is with the form and magnitude of environmental modification, rather than with whether or not Indians lived in harmony with nature with sustainable systems of resource management. Sometimes they did; sometimes they didn't. What they did was to change their landscape nearly everywhere, not to the extent of post-Colonial Europeans, but in important ways that merit attention (Denevan, 1992:370).

Joe, another Kalinago interviewee, pointed out some of the ways in which the Kalinago have had lasting influences on Dominica's natural environment, using the example of introduced species:

...we have in the forest snakes, parrots, agouti ... the snakes were brought over as ceremonial animals by the Caribs, the agouti for food, the parrots for decoration...

It is not unlikely that the Kalinago and their predecessors—the first groups of agricultural people to inhabit Dominica arrived some 400 years BCE (Honychurch, 1995)—introduced other fauna and flora that are common in Dominica today, and whose origins are not widely known or recognized.

The Kalinago imprint on Dominica's nature can also be seen in common practices that people identify as important aspects of their relationships to and knowledge about nature. For instance, Sieur de la Borde, writing in 1674, described the importance that the Kalinago assigned to the moon and to the lunar cycle: "They prize the moon more than the sun ... they regulate their days by the moon ... & not by the sun" (de la Borde, 1674 cited in Hulme and Whitehead, 1992:141). This emphasis on the moon and lunar cycle is still evident in the Dominican tradition of cultivating gardens according to the lunar phases. None of the non-Kalinago people I spoke to who practised planting (and weeding, harvesting, pruning and processing crops) by the moon identified their practice as having Kalinago antecedents, but Joe drew my attention to the ways in which these and other Kalinago traditions have incorporated themselves into Dominican ways of life and nature practice:

Most of the natural heritage of Dominica is hinged onto the Carib—those of African descent have their connection too, but most of it is hinged onto the Carib: astrology, herbal medicine, fishing, cooking habits and food preparation all continue... So you have that heritage, a marked heritage there...

Several scholars have critiqued representations of new world landscapes as untouched, pristine, "a world of barely perceptible human disturbance" (Shetler, 1991:226 cited in Denevan, 1992:370). Such representations have effectively concealed the ways in which those landscapes were inhabited

human landscapes. They overlooked or ignored the ways the landscapes had been used, modified and shaped by the indigenous Americans, they were used to justify European colonization, and they functioned to erase, or at least efface, the presence, practices and societies of the people who dwelt in this world before it was 'new'. In the preceding discussion I have shown how similar outcomes might arise and have arisen as a result of representations, not of the landscape, of nature itself, but of people's practices in and relationships to nature. As colonization of the Caribbean proceeded, changing portrayals served to diminish the Kalinago's engagements with nature in Dominica, by presenting these engagements not as purposeful, knowledgeable and productive, but as casual, even careless. The idea that nature in Dominica protected the Kalinago, rather than it being the other way round, can be seen as a present-day derivative of these latter depictions, one that portrays the Kalinago as a passive presence in the landscape, acted on by nature (and the conquering Europeans) rather than acting on it (and them).

Denevan points out that the pristine myth of the Americas may have been a product of genuine ignorance, rather than intentional invention: its roots may "lie in part with early observers unaware of human impacts that may be obvious to scholars today, particularly for vegetation and wildlife" (Denevan, 1992:379). Research has since uncovered features and characteristics that bear witness to the ubiquity, longevity and success of Amerindian imprints on American landscapes (Denevan, 1992). Further research in Dominica may bring to light more information about how much of Dominica's natural heritage is a markedly Kalinago heritage. New findings may produce more information about how the island's physical environment was employed and influenced by the Kalinago and their pre-Columbian predecessors, and may also highlight specific Kalinago practices and retentions that are still a part of Dominicans' day-to-day relationships with nature in the 21st century.

4.2 Peasant Natures

If Quashee will not honestly aid in bringing out those sugars, cinnamons and nobler products of the West Indian Islands, for the benefit of all mankind, then I say neither will the Powers permit Quashee to continue growing pumpkins there for his own lazy benefit.

(Carlyle, 1853:37)

Such industry as is now to be found is, as elsewhere in general, the industry of the black peasantry. ...A state of things more hopelessly provoking was never seen. Skill and capital and labour have only to be brought to bear together, and the land might be a Garden of Eden.

...Here was all this profusion of nature, lavish beyond all example, and the enterprising youth of England were neglecting a colony which might yield them wealth beyond the treasures of the old sugar planters ... leaving Dominica, which might be the garden of the world ... as if such a place had no existence.

(Froude, 1888:159,160)

We grew what the békés call secondary crops and we call food crops.

(Chamoiseau, 1998:128)

In chapter 3, I made mention of how discourses of the Caribbean are shaped by “the controlling metaphors ‘paradise’ and ‘plantation’” (Strachan, 2002:3-4). Another pair of concepts through which the Caribbean might be imagined and understood is that of plantation and plot, the tension between the master’s estate and the provision grounds of the slaves and ex-slaves (Wynter, 1971, cited in DeLoughrey, 2011). In the following discussion, I contemplate how both plantation and provision ground can be seen as material expressions and sites for the development of particular orientations to nature. In this light, the colonial disparagement of the black peasantry and their industry can be read, as was the case with the Kalinago, as a derogation of Caribbean nature relations and practices.

In the last of the three epigraphs to this section, taken from the novel *Texaco*, Patrick Chamoiseau is writing of his native Martinique, but his descriptions of Creole gardening in the highlands of Martinique could apply just as well to neighbouring Dominica in the years both preceding and subsequent to the emancipation of the slaves in 1834. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot points out in *Peasants and Capital: Dominica in the World Economy* (1988), prior to Emancipation in Dominica a thriving system of peasantry—or proto-peasantry, as Mintz (1974) dubbed it—co-existed with the plantation mode of production. In addition to powering the export-focused plantation economy, slaves in Dominica were allowed to cultivate—though not to own or control—provision grounds for their own subsistence. This practice was not just permitted, but encouraged and endorsed by the colonial administration (Trouillot, 1989; Mantz, 2002). It was a benefit to the colonial powers in that it relieved plantation owners and managers of some of the burden of having to feed their slaves, without infringing on the lands designated for profit-making plantation production (since the provision grounds were usually located on marginal, less easily cultivable ground).

Prior to Emancipation the planter class would have gained significant advantages from the existence of slave-cultivated plots and gardens. By allowing (explicitly or tacitly) the enslaved black people of the region to cultivate their own gardens, planters were relieved of some (and in some cases, most) of the responsibility of having to feed their captive workforce (Dunn, 1973; Berleant-Schiller and Pulsipher, 1986). They would also have received income from the commission slaves were required to pay for the privilege of being allowed to trade in the goods they had grown themselves (Mantz, 2002). Furthermore, as Pulsipher (1990) points out, the slaves' multi-crop methods of gardening (so distinct from the industrial mono-cropping pursued by the colonizers) provided better nutrition than would have been available otherwise. On islands where such gardening was widespread and trade in excess produce permitted, the benefits of better nourishment accrued to both the slave cultivators and the free planter class (Pulsipher, 1990).

Another advantage to the planters and administrators, and one that, according to Mintz (1974) and Hall (1960, cited in Pulsipher, 1990), they intentionally exploited, was that slaves who were permitted to establish and keep their own gardens were likely to develop an attachment to the land and to their place on the land. An example of how much these gardens meant to the enslaved people in the West Indies can be found in the history of the beginning of the Haitian revolution: as Trouillot (2002) points out, the initial demands made by the rebel slaves were not for total freedom, but included insistence on the right and liberty to spend more time (three days a week) working in their personal gardens.

In Dominica, proto-peasant cultivation went beyond simple subsistence; slaves were allowed to trade surplus produce in Sunday markets in Roseau and Portsmouth, and to keep a portion of their earnings for themselves (Mantz, 2002). A similar situation had prevailed in the period of French settlement, and it was reported that several cultivators and market traders, despite having to pay their owners a considerable weekly fee for the privilege of market trading, earned enough through their effort to buy their freedom (Mantz, 2002). Within the plantation economy, then, enslaved people in Dominica were establishing, through what Trouillot has called “a peasant breach in the slave mode of production” (1988:73), a relationship with the land, and with nature, that provided them not only with sustenance and subsistence, but also with a sense of self-determination and an opportunity to achieve freedom.

It is not surprising that the colonial powers had a contentious relationship with the Caribbean (proto-)peasantry both prior and subsequent to Emancipation (Mintz, 1974; Trouillot, 1989). After Emancipation, Dominica’s Africa-descended people were no longer bound to the plantation system—indeed, one observer of the time noted that they were assiduously opposed to entering into any agreements to provide labour on the estates (Trouillot, 1989)—and there were no longer substantial economic benefits accrued to the estates via their small-scale cultivation. The cultivators and their provision

grounds—gardens, as they are known on the island—began to be perceived as problematic.

Trouillot has used the following quote, from the inaugural speech given in Dominica in 1872 by newly-arrived administrator Alexander Moir, to illustrate the Colonial Office's attitude towards the island's peasant class:

At first sight, one cannot imagine how, with a population of over 27,000 inhabitants, so much of the islands lies uncultivated, and so many natural resources remain undeveloped, and it is only when one discovers that the evil of the squatting system is not unknown, and that the commendable and rapidly increasing class of peasant proprietorship is in existence, that it is explained how a general independence from the necessities to labour, with natural wants supplied cheaply and without much exertion, enable the peasant to give, or to withhold, at his pleasure, that labour, without which capital is useless (Colonial Office 74/33, Appendix to Minutes of the Legislative Assembly, cited in Trouillot, 1989:710).

Trouillot identifies this as a watershed statement, in that it was the first official acknowledgement of the existence and rise "of a peasantry defined as a class of proprietors" (Trouillot, 1989:710) in Dominica. Prior to Moir's speech there had been unwillingness to describe the growing numbers of small farmers in Dominica as peasants or a peasantry, and even up to the 20th century, planters and officials in Dominican were reluctant to recognize the existence of a local peasantry (Trouillot, 1989). Overall, though, Moir's acknowledgement of the "commendable and rapidly increasing class of peasant proprietorship" seems to be a case of damning with faint praise. The presence of a peasant class is described as commendable, indeed, but it is also blamed for Dominica's lamentable underdevelopment. It is further implied that the peasants are lazy and undisciplined. Moir's speech may have provided Dominica's emergent peasantry with some recognition, but there was little in it indicative of appreciation for their labour.

Indeed it is strongly implied that peasants hardly labour at all, "their natural wants being supplied cheaply and without much exertion". In Moir's speech

there are traces of two ideas about tropical nature that were previously discussed in chapter 3. First, a hint of the notion of the rich abundance of nature in the tropics. Second, the accompanying belief that this promotes in inhabitants, particularly non-European inhabitants, an inclination towards lives of indolence and idleness. Moir's remarks are not unlike Carlyle's declaration that in the West Indies, where sunshine and rich soil supply themselves gratis, 'Quashee' and his companions spent their days sitting blissfully with "their beautiful muzzles up to the ears in pumpkins ... the pumpkins cheap as grass in those rich climates ... labour cannot be hired, so cheap are the pumpkins" (Carlyle, 1853:5).

Moir's sentiments were echoed a decade later by Dominica's Acting President John Spencer Churchill, who declared that "peasant proprietorship is, no doubt, rather to be deprecated than encouraged in the case of the Negroes, who are apt in that state, to lapse into barbarous idleness" (Dominica Blue Book: 1882:76, cited in Honychurch, 2001). The recurring argument here is clearly that the Dominican peasantry should be compelled to labour more productively, to engage in forms of cultivation that were worthier and more virtuous (Carlyle, 1853) than peasant farming.

Trouillot (1988, 1989) has discussed in some detail the reluctance of planters and local officials to recognize Dominica's peasantry. He attributes this to a resistance to "new relations of production that gave cultivators firmer control of the labour process" (Trouillot, 1989:704), accompanied by an unwillingness to accept "the independence of the cultivator and small-scale agriculture" (Trouillot, 1989:705). I suggest—and this is meant to complement, not contradict, Trouillot's assessment—that planters and officials were not only reluctant to accept new relations of production, but they were also chary about acknowledging ways of relating to the land that were at odds with colonial ideas about and orientations to nature in the colonies. The conflict between plantation and plot in Dominica was indicative of prevailing ideas about what was the right sort of relationship to nature. It can be viewed in the context of a long-standing British discourse on 'improvement' and a corresponding "long history of blaming peasants for

economic backwardness and social underdevelopment” (Handy, 2009:236). This discourse had its origins in the 16th century enclosure of the English commons (Drayton, 2000; Handy, 2009).

Enclosure in Britain entailed the privatization of public and common lands and the removal of lands from control by commoners. Peasant farmers were evicted from their lands and compelled to labour for the benefit of the landlord. Enclosure and the incorporation of family farms, smallholdings and allotments into large estates were deemed necessary for the ‘improvement’ of the land in order to effect the most efficient and profitable use of natural and other resources. Peasants and smallhold farming were seen as inimical to the “cult of improvement” (Drayton, 2000:52), in part because of the peasant’s perceived propensity to avoid productive labour (Drayton, 2000; Handy, 2009). One of the first colonial applications of the principles of improvement outside the United Kingdom took place in Ireland (Handy, 2009). It was represented as an attempt to make profitable use of land previously occupied by peasants who were seen to be living lives of barbarism and sloth, facilitated by the easy availability of potatoes, a “food produced in great quantities at trifling cost” (official government report, dated 1845, cited in Handy, 2009:331). There are evident similarities here to the declarations that were made about the Caribbean peasantry. Carlyle warned that the post-Emancipation West Indies were in danger of becoming a “Black Ireland” (1853:8) and it is clear that he was treating the pumpkin as the West Indian equivalent of the Irish potato.

Drayton (2000) argues that the crusade of agricultural improvement of nature was motivated not only by capitalist principles and Enlightenment science, but also by Christian religion. The Biblical story of the Garden of Eden and of Adam and Eve provided a model for and explanation of humankind’s role in nature. Thus not only were the descendants of Adam (and Eve) inheritors of Adam’s God-given dominion over nature and the endowment of nature as a source of sustenance, but they were also charged with carrying on Adam’s mission of “perfecting the fallen world with his skill and labour” (Drayton, 2000:51). This religious rhetoric can be seen in Froude’s description of

Dominica as “a land fertile as Adam’s paradise, still waiting for the day when ‘the barren woman shall bear children’” (Froude, 1888:171). Improvement was not merely a scientific and economic enterprise; it was also understood as the fulfilment of God’s will in terms of humanity’s dominion over nature. The project of improvement undertaken in England and exported to the British colonies can be seen as the manifestation of a divinely-ordered relationship between humankind and nature. Both economic and moral arguments could be marshalled to condemn a peasantry that would not submit to the imperative of improvement.

Later accounts of Dominica did not criticize the Dominican peasantry quite as harshly as Moir did, but they performed the same deft trick of simultaneously acknowledging and dismissing the presence of black Dominicans and their relationship with the land. For example, in his notorious pro-Empire text *The English in the West Indies, or, the Bow of Ulysses* (1888), Froude describes the market in Roseau where

you see the produce of the soil; there you see the people that produce it; and you see them not on show ... but in their active working condition. ...Under these trees were hundreds of black women, young and old, with their fish and fowls, and fruit and bread, their yams and sweet potatoes, their oranges and limes and plantains. They had walked in from the country five or ten miles before sunrise with their loaded baskets on their heads (Froude, 1888:153-154).

Despite this favourable portrayal of the people who bring forth the produce of Dominica’s soil, Froude found it deplorable that “such industry as is now to be found is, as elsewhere in general, the industry of the black peasantry” (1888:159). The prevalence of peasant farming was treated as indicative of Dominica’s woeful underdevelopment, rather than as a potential or actual contributor to the island’s wellbeing. In Froude’s opinion, what was needed to remedy Dominica’s lamentable condition was the industry of educated, enterprising, energetic (and preferably English) settlers who would undertake the task of improving the island and making it profitable. In this scheme, the role of the “exceptionally worthy” (Froude, 1888:173) black

population would be to labour “with interest and goodwill” (Froude, 188:165) on British-run estates.

Some twenty years later, in 1906, Symington Grieve wrote about Dominica’s potential “as a field for British settlers and also ... its suitability for the safe investment of British capital” (Grieve, 1906:3). Grieve observed that “by far the greater portion of the agricultural lands on the island are in native hands and entirely worked by these people ... black men with their wives and families” (p. 24). These circumstances are not treated as in any way posing a hindrance to British settlement and investment; if anything they are described so as to provide a warrant for it. Grieve paid no serious attention to the practice of peasant agriculture. The reader is told little about how “these people” farmed, what they grew, where, in what quantities, or how much it was worth. Independent cultivation by peasant farmers was immaterial to Grieve, and like Froude before him, he assigned the black peasantry hardly any role in developing the capabilities of Dominica, other than as guides through the dense forests (an implicit acknowledgement of the ‘native’s’ familiarity with and skilled navigation of nature in Dominica) or as sources of cheap labour on British-owned estates.

Having discussed how the establishment of such estates can be seen, in part, as the establishment of a proper and divinely-ordered relationship to nature in the Caribbean, I now turn to consideration of the types of nature relations involved in peasant agriculture.

It is first essential to mention that nature in Dominica, in the form of the island’s rugged terrain, has been seen as conducive to the development of the peasantry. Decades after Emancipation, in the 1920s and 1930s, the Wood Commission (1922) and the Closer Union Commission (1933), reporting on economic and social conditions in Dominica, asserted that the prevalence of peasant cultivation in Dominica was engendered by the island’s natural characteristics, which were deemed to favour agriculture “carried out ... by peasant proprietors on somewhat primitive principles” (Closer Union Commission, 1933:4). Indeed, it is now generally agreed that Dominica’s

landscape (and that of other hilly, wooded Caribbean islands) facilitated the establishment of a local peasantry (Trouillot, 1988; Richardson, 1997). Prior to Emancipation, the occurrence of the peasant breach within the plantation system was linked to the availability of what the estate owners and administrators would have thought of as marginal land, "land that could shelter the peasant labour process in food production without reducing space reserved for plantation production" (Trouillot, 1988:73). The emergence of the (proto-)peasantry was therefore favoured by Dominica's "steep or broken terrain, ...forest lands, ...mountainous topography" (Trouillot, 1988:73). After Emancipation, the exodus from the plantations was more pronounced in islands, such as Dominica, with a rugged terrain. Such topography had inhibited the European colonial enterprise, and the interior highlands, largely outside the reach of the plantation system, provided places of refuge and retreat for the former slaves, and the grounds for the growth of Dominica's peasant-based agricultural economy (Baker, 1994; Richardson, 1997).

We have seen previously, in this and preceding chapters, how colonial interests portrayed nature in the Caribbean as contributing to the breach between peasant and plantation, by enabling, through its lush abundance, peasants to provide for themselves with a minimal amount of labour. This characterization is less than accurate: cultivating complex gardens of multiple crops, on steep slopes, in relatively poor soil, on an island periodically afflicted by landslides, hurricanes and earthquakes, could hardly be described as a leisurely endeavour, even if one does not take into account the exertion involved in walking miles over rugged terrain to get crops to the market before sunrise, as Froude (1888) described.

However, black Caribbean cultivators' relationships to nature should not be seen as consisting merely of the drudgery of hard labour. As previously mentioned, cultivators were attached to their land, and these attachments emerged from and produced an orientation to nature that differed from those of the colonizers. In this orientation "the land serves primarily as a symbol of personhood, security and freedom" (Besson, 1987:14-15), rather

than as a purely economic resource from which maximum profit is to be extracted. Of her research among smallhold cultivators on the island of Montserrat, Pulsipher says:

My conversations with present practitioners indicate that they were taught by their elders that gardens had a significance beyond their economic function.

Cultivating on high remote slopes early in the morning calls up feelings of freedom and independence, of affinity with nature, of the solidarity of Black people in landscapes where whites rarely tread. The cultivators feel close to ancestors who worked the same spots, and their labor give them the sense of prosperity that abundant food symbolizes (Pulsipher, 1990:32-33).

Just as the plantation system in Dominica represented and enacted certain orientations to nature, so too would have the (proto-)peasant system that served as a breach in and, later, a full-fledged alternative to the plantation. Further to this, it is likely that just as the estate was a Caribbean manifestation of a particular British orientation to nature, so peasant gardens involved the material expression of orientations to nature that originated from Africa. Africans who were transported to Dominica and other islands of the West Indies would have brought with them their own philosophies and traditions concerning nature and the natural world, as did the Europeans. Indeed, it may well have been the persistence of these traditions that has helped to establish the Afro-Caribbean peasantry as a formidable cultural, social and economic force.

There are many difficulties in identifying specific African retentions in Caribbean cultures (Mintz, 1974; Carney and Voeks, 2003), and it is beyond the scope of this research to attempt to identify the philosophical traditions and orientations to nature that might have been brought to the Caribbean by enslaved Africans. There has however, been some prior research that has demonstrated the retention and transfer of African principles as manifested in *practices* relating to nature. Crop preference, tool use, mixed cropping, slash and burn agriculture, and the cultivation of medicinal plants (Dunn, 1973; Berleant-Schiller and Pulsipher, 1986; Pulsipher, 1990; Westmacott,

2001; Carney and Voeks, 2003) are some of the practices that have made a “strong African imprint” (Berleant-Schiller and Pulsipher, 1986:19) on New World cultivation systems. In Dominica, local practices of cultivation were also influenced by the agricultural strategies of the Kalinago (Baker, 1994), so that people’s relationships with the natural world were jointly shaped by what was “learned from the Indians [*sic*] and [what was] brought from Africa” (Baker, 1994:113). There is still much work to be done to bring to light the ways in which African- and indigenous-derived knowledges and understandings of nature have shaped cultures and landscapes in the Caribbean (Carney and Voeks, 2003).

Agricultural engagements with nature would also have helped the slaves and their descendants to cultivate their knowledge of the Caribbean landscapes they inhabited, as well as their ability to manage those landscapes with skill and care. Enslaved cultivators, *neg mawon* who escaped from the plantations and fled to the hills, and free peasants were able to develop their competency as farmers and to synthesize a distinctively Caribbean system of farming, characterized by the planting of certain core crops and the use of particular plot management methods and cultivation techniques (Berleant-Schiller and Pulsipher, 1986). Again, I quote from Pulsipher’s report on her research in Montserrat, a passage that conveys the expertise involved in the cultivation of a traditional Caribbean garden:

[B]oth the historic and modern gardens ... are complex systems of environmental management that take into consideration angle of slope, moisture availability, cycles of soil fertility, wind patterns, propitious times for planting, tending and harvesting, and the specific requirements of the dozens of species grown. Plants are treated as individuals, with their micro-environment carefully managed for sustained or prolific production; and the continuous genetic selection of the most desirable characteristics in plants fosters improvement of the system over time (Pulsipher, 1990: 10).

The development of similar gardens in Dominica would have required more than just the adoption of various African, Kalinago and European farming methods; it would have required innovative adaptation of these methods to

suit and make effective use of the environments available (Pulsipher, 1990; Baker, 1994)—and here we should recall that the lands available were those that least lent themselves to easy husbandry. Through this adaptation, the characteristics of the natural world contributed to the evolution of a creolized Dominican agriculture and a skilled and knowledgeable Dominican peasantry.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries British colonial administrators were beginning to officially recognize the value of Dominica's peasant farmers. An 1897 report acknowledged that peasant cultivators might "under proper regulations" (West India Royal Commission, 1897:51) make a contribution to the island's economy. The aim was to enrol (one might say co-opt) Dominica's peasantry to serve the purposes of the British colonial plantation system. This objective was elucidated further in the same report where it was recommended that steps should be taken to "instruct and encourage the small cultivators to make the best use of the land, and to grow successfully such plants as will enable them to produce articles for export" (West India Royal Commission, 1897:126).

Some years later, the landmark West India Royal Commission Report of 1945 (also known as the Moyne Report, after the head of Commission) made peasant agriculture in the British West Indies the subject of earnest investigation and extensive consideration. It was averred that "the question of the owning of land by peasants in the West Indian colonies is likely to assume an increasing importance in social policy" (West India Royal Commission, 1945:42). Numerous recommendations were made with the aim of expanding and improving the practice of peasant agriculture to meet local needs (West India Royal Commission, 1945; Green, 1999; Honychurch, 2001), rather than to increase profits for the Colonial Office. With reference to Dominica, an island described as being, despite its beauty and fertility, much afflicted by poverty and underdevelopment, the Commission declared that "[t]he land of Dominica is capable of providing sufficient and satisfactory food for its inhabitants—given ... the settlement of a greater proportion of the population as peasants on the land" (West India Royal Commission,

1945:407). A commentator in the March 2, 1946 issue of *Nature* agreed with the Commission's finding, and expressed the view that "the foremost agricultural need is increased production of food ... peasant agriculture is always likely to be the most helpful enterprise in the ultimate interests of the community" (Fitzgerald, 1946:254). (It is not altogether clear which is 'the community'—the Caribbean cultivators, the planter class, the colonial administration in Britain?—to which he refers).

The Moyne Report presented not only a new perspective on the importance of peasant agriculture to the West Indian colonies, but also an admission of the undesirability of the single-crop specialization that had been so instrumental in the colonial relationship to Caribbean nature. Along with advice on the expansion of the peasantry, one of the Commission's strong recommendations for the British colonies in the Caribbean was the diversification of agriculture away from commercial mono-cropping. Dominica, however, was already moving in the opposite direction, along the lines of the recommendations made in 1897. The Moyne Commission's research took place in late 1938 and early 1939, but the resulting report was not published until 1945, and by this time export-driven cultivation of bananas, the crop that brought hitherto unknown prosperity to Dominica and its peasantry, had already been firmly established. Trouillot (1988) and others (Thomson, 1987; Baker, 1994; Grossman, 1998; Clegg, 2002) have written in detail about the rise and fall of the banana industry in Dominica and other Eastern Caribbean islands, and I have provided a brief summary in chapter 1; I shall not address that topic further here.

So far in this chapter, I have focused on how particular representations or misrepresentations or lack of representations of people's relationships to nature have reinforced colonial regimes of dominance over nature in the Caribbean. I present now a few thoughts about how Dominicans'—particularly black Dominicans'—relationships to nature would have been shaped by their participation in, and not just their resistance to, these colonial regimes. Although it has not been evident in the discussion hitherto,

until relatively recently, Dominicans of the peasant class also had relationships with nature in the space and sphere of influence of the estates.

This aspect of the estate/garden polarity came to my attention through the personal accounts of nature shared with me by Dominicans whom I interviewed during my fieldwork. When I spoke to people about their relationships with nature and the role that nature had played in their lives growing up, or in their parents' lives, it was common for them to mention the estate, to make reference to seeing or accompanying their elders at work on the estate. I also met and spoke to a few Dominicans whose parents or grandparents had been estate owners, and who had themselves inherited portions of estate lands. I heard stories of conflicts—some relatively peaceful, others violent—that had taken place in the 1960s and '70s between estate owners and labourers, tenants and squatters (Baker, 1994; Honychurch, 1995). People would point to an area now occupied by houses and make reference to the time, which they could personally remember, when it had all been part of an estate. In one of the villages where I stayed, I could see from the garden of my temporary home an expanse of apparently uncultivated land that was still part of one of those estates. Local personal histories of Dominica and relationships to nature in Dominica were not entirely in accordance with accounts of Dominica that portrayed it as an island where most of the agricultural land was in the hands of the black peasantry, who were working the land on their own terms and for their own benefit.

My intention is not to argue that the importance of the peasantry to Dominica's history has been overstated. Rather, in keeping with Mintz's (1974) observation that peasant communities usually include, and sometimes serve to conceal, the presence of substantial numbers of landless labourers, I wish to draw attention to the fact that even in what was described as "essentially an island of peasant proprietors" (Green, 1999:58), less autonomous forms of agricultural activity were neither uncommon nor insignificant.

We have seen how the British colonial exercise in the Caribbean incorporated and was influenced by certain understandings about humanity's rightful relationship to nature. These understandings and the ways in which they were put into practice via the system of mono-crop plantation agriculture had lasting consequences for Caribbean societies, for the natural environments of Caribbean islands, and for the identities of these islands as spaces and places in the Western imagination. They also had impacts for the people brought to or born in the Caribbean as slaves and compelled to labour to produce the "nobler products of the West Indian islands" (Carlyle, 1853:37). Plantation slavery was, in addition to being a mode of production based on particular labour, social and racial relations, a mode of production based on the forcible establishment of a particular corporeal relationship with nature.

Take this passage from *The Dominica Story* (Honychurch, 1995), which describes the cultivation of coffee on estates in Dominica in the 18th century:

The forest had to be cut and burnt and the land prepared for planting coffee seedlings. Fields were marked out in even rows with plants an equal distance from each other. On steep slopes the land was levelled with terraces—both for the convenience of working and to prevent soil from being washed away by rain. ...It was on the earth between these terraces that the coffee was planted. Well trimmed wind-breaks of *Poixdoux* trees protected the plants from strong winds and the fields were constantly kept weeded and tidy to ensure good yields. Ground provisions were planted between the young trees...

By the end of August and beginning of September the coffee was ready for harvesting. From early morning the slaves went out to pick the berries. (Honychurch, 1995:72-73).

The description of coffee cultivation is written for the most part in a passive voice, which serves to create a narrative distance from the fact that the operation of the coffee estates involved repeated forced and laborious

encounters with the land³. As an exercise, one might rephrase the passage in the first person and the active voice, the voice of the enslaved labourer, thus: “We had to cut and burn the forests and prepare the land for planting coffee seedlings. We had to mark out the fields in even rows with plants an equal distance from each other. On steep slopes we had to level the land with terraces...” etc. Consider how such a recasting works differently from the original wording to make manifest the ways in which the work of cultivating a coffee estate was one of personal embodied engagement with nature (although the element of duress is still somewhat inconspicuous).

It seems reasonable to conclude that the daily experiences of estate labourers, both in slavery and after Emancipation, would have contributed to their understandings of and orientations towards nature. Mintz (1974) writes of slavery as a mode of relating labour to the land in the Caribbean. Consider (and this is an additional, rather than an alternative, proposition) that for the enslaved Caribbean cultivator on the estate, her relationship to the land was not just an economic relationship of labour to commodity, but an embodied relationship between self and nature, a relationship shaped and mediated by the harsh reality of coerced toil.

I shall not speculate about what the characteristics and qualities of this relationship might have been—it has been suggested that it was one of profound alienation from nature and the land (Glissant, 1989 cited in DeLoughrey, 2011). I wish merely to point out that in addition to their relationships to nature via the cultivation of their gardens, many black Dominicans, even well into the 20th century, also experienced nature via arduous and often poorly compensated labour on the estates. This was likely, to quote Jamaica Kincaid (1993:50), “a relationship to agriculture [and one might add, to nature] that [did] not please them at all”. There is room for

³ Here I am reminded of Trouillot’s (1989) distinction between *cultivators* in Dominica (the peasantry and their unfree predecessors) and *non-cultivators* (planters and officials): Trouillot’s use of this terminology—undoubtedly deliberate, given his emphasis on the importance of words and designations—highlights the irony of calling British estate owners and managers ‘planters’ when in fact it was quite a different group of people doing the actual planting.

further productive study of not just the contrasts between estate and garden, plantation and plot, but also—in the contexts of Dominica and of the Caribbean in general—of the ways in which Caribbean labourers and cultivators have had to negotiate, participate in, and relate to both domains simultaneously.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how in Dominica colonizers depicted the colonized as having inferior and unsatisfactory relationships with nature, and how these depictions helped undergird the colonizing mission. When the Kalinago were represented as making lackadaisical use of Dominica's natural resources, this implicitly served to justify settlement by the French, who would use nature more assiduously and productively. Some 200 years later, Afro-Dominican peasants were similarly portrayed as lazy and indifferent cultivators. This allowed for them—rather than the colonial administrators—to be assigned the blame for Dominica's perceived chronic underdevelopment. The prevalence of peasant agriculture was also treated as evidence that Dominica needed to be settled by enterprising Britons who would improve the colony.

These depictions were grounded in European understandings of nature and how it should be used, productively and for profit. There was little room for or interest in consideration of how the Kalinago or the black peasantry thought of and used nature differently. Colonial dismissal of Caribbean relationships to nature meant that the skills, knowledges and efforts involved in these relationships were overlooked and undervalued.

It is not possible to recover a complete picture of historical Caribbean orientations to nature. However, as I have demonstrated, they can be beneficially re-appraised through critical examination of colonial chronicles, and through accompanying consideration of the continuities that connect past nature relations to those of the present.

5 Tourism Natures

There was much to be seen in Dominica of the sort which travellers go in search of. There was the hot sulphur spring in the mountains; there was the hot lake; there was another volcanic crater, a hollow in the centre of the island now filled with water and surrounded with forest; there were the Caribs...

(Froude, 1888:150)

As mentioned in chapter 1, as Dominica's banana industry waned, increasing emphasis was placed on the development of the country's tourism sector, with a focus on nature-based tourism. Tourism has now become one of the leading contributors to the Dominican economy (Commonwealth of Dominica Central Statistical Office, 2005; Commonwealth of Dominica Central Statistical Office, 20—). With this in mind, and in recognition of my initial encounter with Dominica, which inspired this research, I begin my discussion of present-day relationships with nature by looking at some of the nature relations that are a part of Dominican tourism practice. In this chapter, I discuss how Dominicans who work in the tourism sector relate to the nature that is their island's leading tourism attraction. In so doing I pose a challenge to the conventional academic wisdom about how nature tourism adversely affects local relationships with nature. The presentation and discussion of the primary data—gathered via interviews, observation and participation in Dominica—is prefaced with, first, a brief review and discussion of some of the ways nature tourism has been treated in the academic literature, and second, a history of the development of Dominica's nature tourism industry.

5.1 Nature as a toured object

For many years after the publication of *The Tourist*, Dean MacCannell's (1999[1976]) seminal work on the practice of tourism, some of the most

vigorous theoretical debate in the field of tourism studies concerned notions of authenticity (see for examples MacCannell, 1999[1976]; Cohen, 1988; Silver, 1993; Hughes, 1995; Wang, 1999; Taylor, 2001; Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Belhassen and Caton, 2006; Cole, 2007). A consequence of this was that relatively little attention was given to nature as a tourist attraction. Evaluations of authenticity were applied to social and cultural products such as “works of art, festivals, cuisine, dress, housing and so on” (Wang, 1999:350). The concept of authenticity was not seen to apply to nature, because nature was not understood as being socially or culturally produced or practised (Wang, 1999).

This has been changing in recent years, as increasing concern for the environment has brought more attention to the role of nature in tourism, in two main ways. One of these involved a concern about the adverse impacts of tourism, particularly mainstream mass tourism, on the natural environment, a concern that was typically accompanied by the acknowledgement of tourism’s dependence on the natural resources of the destination. This led to increasing interest in sustainable tourism development. Tourism development approaches that would “ensure long-term ecological viability *and* tourism viability” (Romeril, 1989:206) were deemed of special importance for nature tourism, a tourism niche heavily dependent on the attraction of well-preserved ecosystems.

In addition to paying greater attention to the environmental impacts of tourism, scholars also began to direct their focus to the emerging phenomenon of nature tourism. In a 1992 review of this rapidly growing ‘special interest’ type of tourism, several potential areas of investigation for researchers with an interest in nature-based tourism were identified (Valentine, 1992). The first of these was concerned with determining the “attractive powers of nature” (Valentine, 1992: 123). The second related to the tourist’s expectations of and criteria for satisfaction in relation to nature. The third encouraged the identification of key characteristics (e.g. biological diversity, rarity, spectacle) that would make for an appealing and popular nature tourism attraction.

In positioning nature as something that could be marketed and managed for greater tourist satisfaction, i.e. as a tourism product, these questions served as steps towards an understanding of tourism natures as culturally produced and subjectively experienced. Valentine's questions are answered, in part, by the definition of nature in the *Encyclopedia of Tourism*:

Nature is undeveloped resources including water, vegetation, soil and wildlife that support and attract tourism activities. These resources in nature influence tourism activities as attraction features, settings or pristine areas. ...The undisturbed condition of areas such as uninhabited tropical islands, jungles and inland waters, has a special appeal to tourists...

The value of nature as it relates to tourism includes aesthetic, ecological and ethical components. Aesthetically, the value of nature is a collection of resources that creates visual, auditory and other sensory effects which can be experienced by tourists. They visit areas to witness these effects first hand in an authentic experience that permits them to explore the mystery and unknown elements of nature. Ecologically, the value of nature is for its own sake, where it is seen as more than a collection of resources and involves an interrelated, interconnected set of functions and processes composing a greater ecosystem. Ethically, the value of nature is in preserving the natural resources and processes, and in preventing impacts that tourist activities may cause (Farrell, 2000:409).

This definition provides an idea of how tourism, as a social practice, serves to produce and reproduce certain sorts of natures, possessing distinct characteristics and valued in specific ways.

The *Encyclopedia of Tourism* goes on to differentiate between nature tourism and ecotourism. In nature tourism primacy is accorded to the aesthetic value of the natural environment and its function as a tourist attraction, whereas with ecotourism "nature ... represents ecological values of ecosystem protection, and ethical values of enhancing or maintaining the balance between tourism use and natural systems integrity" (Farrell, 2000:409-410). Of the two, it is ecotourism that has been the subject of more incisive analysis using the recurring themes—authenticity, commodification, effects on local

culture—of the academic treatment of tourism. It is my conjecture that this is because ecotourism is more explicitly value-laden than nature tourism. It is easier to see how, through ecotourism touristic natures are constructed by means of “the superimposition of a system of social values” (MacCannell, 1999[1976]:119), and thus it is easier to deploy the tools that have been used for analysis of more evidently cultural tourism products. However, the most common appraisals and critiques of ecotourism are also applicable to other, less ostensibly culturally constructed forms of nature tourism.

Among these common critiques is the argument that nature-based tourism results in the commodification of nature (King and Stewart, 1996; Gössling, 2002; Jamal et al., 2003; Carrier and Macleod, 2005; Gray and Campbell, 2007), much as other forms of tourism, such as heritage tourism, have been said to result in the commodification of culture. It has been suggested that as a result of ecotourism—and other forms of nature tourism—local people experience a transformation in the meanings they attribute to nature: it shifts from having intrinsic value or use value as a means of subsistence to being a commodity with commercial and exchange value. Traditions of working with and obtaining sustenance from the land are disrupted (King and Stewart, 1996; Campbell, 2002; Carrier and Macleod, 2005; Ruiz-Ballesteros et al., 2009), affecting local people’s sense of place and their sense of self. One of the implications of arguments in this vein, as with older claims concerning cultural commodification, is that the new orientations to nature engendered by tourism are less authentic than original traditional ways of relating to and valuing nature. However, like the older claims about cultural commodification, these arguments lose some of their force and weight in the face of significant scepticism about the conclusion that commodification and loss of authenticity are inevitable and undesirable consequences of tourism (Cole, 2007).

An argument with greater currency is that tourism serves to impose external values and ideas about what nature is, where it is to be found, the purpose it serves and how it is to be treated. As we have seen, nature in touristic terms is untamed, undeveloped, untouched (Norton, 1996; Farrell, 2000; Waite et

al., 2003; West and Carrier, 2004), characteristics said to be based on modern Western conceptualizations of nature and the natural. Furthermore, according to current environmental principles and the ethics of ecotourism, nature is to be conserved and protected from the impacts of human activities. As a result, nature tourism can function to displace or exclude local people and their customary uses of nature (Place, 1991; Gössling, 2002; West and Carrier, 2004; Meletis and Campbell, 2007; Stronza and Gordillo, 2008). Here the primary concern is not that nature tourism erodes the authenticity of people's relationships and orientations to the natural world, but that it marginalizes said relationships, diminishing or even discrediting them in favour of the hegemonic Western discourses of nature. In this manner ecotourism exercises a form of governance over nature and human-nature relations in destination countries (Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Jamal et al., 2003; West and Carrier, 2004).

In academic dialogues about nature tourism and its consequences for local people, there has been a scarcity of empirical investigations into how residents of ecotourism destinations perceive, value and think about nature. There have been some studies of residents' involvement in, perceptions of and attitudes to nature tourism, and some reports of how habitual nature-related practices such as farming, fishing, hunting and harvesting, have been affected by the introduction of nature tourism (Place, 1991; Campbell, 1999; Campbell, 2002; Gössling, 2002; Meletis and Campbell, 2007). However, the case remains that, considering the prevalence of the argument that nature tourism and ecotourism foist "Western models of society and nature" (West and Carrier, 2004:485) on host populations, there has been surprisingly little research about how local people conceive of, interact with and behave toward nature in tourism destinations. There is a corresponding shortage of empirical research into how these concepts, interactions and behaviours are affected by the introduction and expansion of nature-based tourism. One of the objectives of this chapter is to present some Dominicans' perspectives and practices in relation to touristic nature, and to show how these perspectives and practices incorporate distinctly local and individual ideas of nature.

5.2 The attractions of the nature island

Although Dominica is not one of the Caribbean's more mature tourism destinations (Weaver, 1991; Duval, 2004; Pattullo, 2005) it is evident from Froude's (1888) remarks quoted at the beginning of this chapter that recognition of the island's appeal to travellers is not entirely new.

Apart from reports produced by administrators or investigators concerned with the management of Britain's West Indian colonies, several of the published accounts of Dominica in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were written by adventurous naturalists with an interest in the island's flora, fauna and geology. The growing interest in Dominica among this type of traveller can be seen as part and parcel of the re-naturalization and romanticization of Caribbean nature that began about the mid-19th century, as discussed in chapter 3. Although the authors of this type of account were producing ostensibly scientific reports, their descriptions of Dominica were full of effusive 'pen pictures' rhapsodizing about the island's natural abundance and scenic beauty, in language that would not be amiss in present-day tourism promotional materials (see for examples Endlich, 1880; Ober, 1908; Hodge, 1944a&b). These naturalists probably saw themselves as travellers and adventurers, rather than mere casual tourists. By contrast, the author of a 1935 article more concerned with Dominica's economic geography than with its natural history, described plainly the value that nature might have as a tourism attraction:

As a transit point on the tourist routes in the Caribbean, Dominica may be able to capitalize the loveliness of her mountain, jungles, of her tumbling brooks, of her tropical sunshine, cloud and rain (Harrison, 1935:75).

Mass tourism in the Caribbean expanded rapidly in the latter half of the 20th century, but in Dominica, an island lacking the stereotypical Caribbean assets of sea, sand and sun, tourist arrivals and tourism earnings lagged behind those of other territories of the Lesser Antilles (Shankland, Cox and Associates, 1971a; Weaver, 1991). In 1971, in an effort to find ways to

overcome Dominica's "problems of physical geography" (Weaver, 1991:420) a detailed tourism development strategy, commissioned by the British Ministry of Overseas, was produced (Shankland, Cox and Associates, 1971a&b). The report's specific proposals and recommendations, particularly those related to physical planning and development (e.g. the construction of major resorts), were deemed unrealistic and inappropriate, and the report was rejected by the government (Weaver, 1991; Wilkinson, 2004). This initial negative reception notwithstanding, the tourist development strategy, which was prepared by Shankland, Cox and Associates (SCA), foreshadowed several of the tourism-related developments that have occurred in Dominica since the 1970s (Wilkinson, 2004), and it provided one of the first comprehensive specifications of tourism nature in Dominica.

According to the strategy documents, the pre-eminent allures of nature in Dominica were the island's unspoiled and untouched quality and the accompanying sense of solitude and tranquillity, an atmosphere that was described as being "in complete contrast to urban living" (SCA, 1971a:52). The island's tangible tourist attractions included forests, mountains, rivers and lakes. Beaches could also be converted to an asset, with some enhancement. Well-organized citrus and coconut plantations and old sugar mills might also serve as attractions, but large banana plantations, standing out as "man-made intrusions upon the natural landscape" (SCA 1971b:75) were not seen as easily lending themselves to touristic use.

A persistent theme in the report was the emphasis on nature as scenery and landscape. Much attention was given to measures to enhance Dominica's panoramic beauty, so that forests, mountains, rivers and falls would be displayed to best advantage. Proposed measures included developing lookout points and trails to allow access to "dramatic potential views" (SCA, 1971a:13). Where necessary the landscape was to be improved so as to make it more visually attractive. It was suggested that the black sand beaches on the west coast should be made more attractive by covering them with lighter coloured sand from offshore. Some features were considered to be beyond all intervention: the Boiling Lake was deemed unattractive and uninteresting,

lacking the “wide range of interesting colours normally associated with geysers and sulphur springs” (SCA, 1971b:85). The consultants’ view was that “with its bare earth sides and general lack of vegetation [it was] not unlike a man-made quarry” (SCA, 1971b:85) and therefore not worth the trouble it took to reach it. Amidst a host of recommendations that seem incongruous with the report’s assertion that “the most important action to be taken in developing the island’s attractions is *nothing*” (SCA, 1971a:13), one of the most paradoxical is that trees along the roads should be removed so that visitors could better enjoy their view of trees in the interior, i.e. that forests close by should be cleared so that tourists could see faraway forests more clearly.

Along with the prominence given to the visual consumption of nature there was an indifference to, even a disdain for, more active embodied experiences of the natural world. Walking through the forest was described as unappealing because of the heat, the damp and the arduous uphill climbs. Though magnificent from a distance, the forests’ “all-pervading green” (SCA, 1971b:81) was portrayed as being tedious and unlovely when experienced up close. The report conceded that walks in nature might be enjoyable if they were short and easy, offering diverse visual experiences (such as those provided by rivers, streams and waterfalls) and the promise of a panoramic view at the end. But it was deemed better still to avoid such intimate involvement with nature altogether: “the full grandeur of the forests and mountains can best be appreciated by vehicle” (SCA 1971b:81).

In addition to assessments of the touristic potential of Dominica’s natural features, the SCA report included ambitious plans for major physical development, capacity building and redistribution of population; it was likely these quixotic proposals that led to its rejection by the government of the day. A few years later a new tourism study, the Kasterlak Report, funded by the United Nations, was produced; this provided a more pragmatic consideration of Dominica’s tourism potential (Weaver, 1991). One of the key recommendations of this study was that Dominica should market its natural attributes, particularly those in the interior, to appeal to the niche market of

environmentally conscious visitors (Weaver, 1991; Pattullo, 2005). This new approach would capitalize on the increasing international prominence of the environmental movement and on the associated concern and search for untouched and unspoiled nature. (This potential had been acknowledged, but not emphasized, in the earlier SCA report.) Weaver (1991:420) wrote that “this new approach entailed a shift in perception and basic redefinition of the island’s tourism resources base”. Characteristics (rugged terrain and dense forests) that had previously been seen as liabilities for tourism development in Dominica came to be perceived as assets.

In the wake of the Kasterlak Report, tourism authorities and operators in Dominica pursued a path of what has been referred to as deliberate alternative tourism (Weaver, 1991). Of the islands in the Lesser Antilles, Dominica was deemed the one “most closely associated with comprehensive eco-tourism” (Weaver, 1993:463). This was because of the small scale, low density, low impact and predominantly local ownership of the tourism sector, but also because of the presence of a mountainous interior, less developed coastlines, and coral reefs: “ecotourism-appropriate small island environments” (Weaver, 1993:462).

It is possible that this alternative tourism strategy was neither quite as intentional nor as idealistic as it might have appeared. Tourism arrivals and earnings grew steadily from the 1980s onward (Weaver, 1993; Pattullo, 2005), but Dominica’s economy was still dominated by agriculture, and in particular by the cultivation of bananas for export to the United Kingdom. When, in the early 1990s, the Caribbean banana trade was severely handicapped by trade disputes over preferential access to European markets, the government began to explore tourism—including conventional cruise tourism—much more vigorously than it had before (Weaver, 2004; Wilkinson, 2004; Pattullo, 2005).

Recent tourism policies and plans prescribe that Dominica should expand its tourism development beyond the perceived limits of the nature island destination image (Ministry of Tourism and National Development

Corporation, 2006; CHL Consulting Ltd., 20—). The Ministry of Tourism has declared that tourism stakeholders should no longer “take[] for granted the natural features that are our claim to distinction in the market, believing that their existence alone will draw visitors to our shores” (Ministry of Tourism and National Development Corporation, 2006:iii). As such it has endorsed the development of a more diverse tourism product, with an emphasis on offering a recreational experience, showcasing the country’s cultural heritage and facilitating community participation in tourism.

The SCA tourism strategy emphasized the visual appeal of Dominica’s nature, nature as the object of the tourist gaze (Urry, 2002). The Kasterlak Report, according to Weaver (1991, 1993), helped to pave the way for ecotourism and the concomitant ecological and ethical appreciation of nature in Dominica. Current tourism policies emphasize “experiential” (Ministry of Tourism and National Development Corporation, 2006:3) engagement with nature in Dominica, via adventure tourism and activities such as hiking, trekking, birding and diving. Throughout these changes nature—the island’s “pristine physical environment” (CHL Consulting Ltd., 20—:14)—has continued to be seen as Dominica’s primary tourism asset.

These days Dominica’s catalogue of touristic nature amenities includes the elements identified in the 1971 SCA report—forests, mountains, rivers, streams and waterfalls—as well as several new entries. The underwater marine environment is now included, and tourism authorities tout Dominica’s position as one of the top dive destinations in the world (interview with Esther Thomas; interview with Elizabeth Wayland, Discover Dominica Authority). With the extension out to sea of tourism natures in Dominica, whales have also become a prominent tourist attraction. Since the 1970s, Dominica has designated three national parks, which serve as attractions, as do the flora and fauna within them. Pride of place is given to the oldest of the parks, the Morne Trois Pitons National Park, which was established in 1975 and in 1997 was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). There are several other natural sites that have become signature components

of Dominica's tourism package: Trafalgar Falls, the Freshwater Lake, the Emerald Pool and the Indian River, to name a few. Geothermal features, such as hot sulphur springs and the Boiling Lake (rejected by SCA as insufficiently appealing to visitors) have become important tourist destinations. The Waitukubuli National Trail, a formidable hiking path over 100 miles long, is one of Dominica's newest attractions. Appreciation is growing for the touristic appeal of farms, gardens, and agriculture-based cottage industries, so that Dominica's tourism natures are increasingly to be found in communities and villages as well as out in the hills and forests. The 2005-2015 Tourism Master Plan hints that a replacement for Dominica's current 'limited' nature island destination marketing could involved the tagline "Dominica – More than Nature" (CHL Consulting Ltd., 20—:15). Dominica is of course more than nature, but I believe that the development of the country's tourism sector also shows that there is more *to* nature than 20th century planners allowed for.

5.3 Talking to nature tourism practitioners

The advance of tourism in Dominica has brought changes in how people work and interact with nature—a farmer I spoke to pointed out that many of his former colleagues have given up agriculture to become tour bus drivers (Kenneth, 60s, Morne Prosper). But this does not necessarily mean, as some might argue (King and Stewart, 1996; Jamal et al., 2003; West and Carrier, 2004; Carrier and Macleod, 2005), that nature's meanings have been eroded or impaired. Dominica's tourism natures are abundantly and diversely meaningful, and these meanings can sometimes be a product of tourism practice. I shall illustrate this by means of extracts of interviews with four individuals who work in Dominica's tourism sector, presenting some of their stories about their interactions with and orientations to nature.

5.3.1 Bruce

Bruce has been a tour guide in Dominica for over 15 years. He moved to Dominica in the early 1980s from elsewhere in the Caribbean and found himself ‘fascinated’ and ‘blown away’ by Dominica’s natural environment. “Being a nature lover,” he says, “I became enamoured with the way Dominica was.” His fondness for and enjoyment of nature in Dominica led him to want to share it with others, and he was given the opportunity to do so when he was asked to help “provide a nature experience” for groups of visitors from the United Kingdom. As preparation to host these visitors, who were particularly interested in natural history, botany and dendrology, he did extensive research about Dominica’s biophysical environment, especially the plant life and

the botanical make-up of the plant, what is the genus, what is the family, what is the species ... and you sort of try to learn about plants, trying to tell the family by certain markings on the leaves or the way the flowers are distributed, you know?

As the tourism industry in Dominica grew, Bruce began to seek out new places and experiences to offer his clientele, places off the beaten tourism track. He finds these places by talking to farmers—“they will tell you about some waterfall that they see when they pass through certain areas”—and forestry officers—“they’re traversing extensively across the island and they come across unique places that people don’t usually go to”—as well as through his own ramblings in the interior, often with a camera. Speaking of one of his favourite places on the island, Ti Tou Gorge, he said:

Just the whole ambience, you know, the formation of the rocks, the fact that you’re swimming through this canyon to get to the waterfall, and then the way the rocks, the intricate way in which the rocks are carved, it’s absolutely amazing. And the experience is—you don’t really experience it unless you swim through it.

He also enjoys being in the rainforest:

Another great experience for me is when I'm in the dense rainforest and there's a shower of rain and then it stops and the sun comes through and the droplets on the leaves, you know, it refracts the sunlight like a prism, and they just create this marvellous scene that is just amazing, and I love to see that.

Bruce considers Dominica's rainforest to be an important tourist attraction:

You know, the rainforest is a big part of what they expect. They want to see what a rainforest is. Because for people who grew up in cities, hearing about a rainforest is something exotic, it's something they have never experienced. So they would like to walk in a rainforest, see what its like, be told about it. And its very important that we have the capacity to ... really give information about what a tropical rainforest actually is.

In general, he believes that it is important to tourism practitioners in Dominica to know and understand nature: "they have to understand the natural environment. ...It's necessary to understand it, in order to communicate it." Understanding in this sense involves the acquisition of factual information about the natural world, and Bruce made a clear distinction between understanding and appreciating nature. (I shall return to the relationship between knowledge and appreciation later in the chapter.) A tour guide's training and certification are evidence of her understanding of nature, but do not necessarily bear any relation to her appreciation of nature. In Bruce's words:

I think the certification is good because it ensures some level of competence, because for you to be certified it means that you have to go through some training, you have to be able to convince somebody that you have enough knowledge ... [So] I can speak to how much understanding they have, but I cannot speak to your appreciation. You can tell me you appreciate it, but I don't, I don't know that. ... I cannot speak for someone else's appreciation, but I can speak for their knowledge based on their demonstration of that knowledge.

5.3.2 Hampton

Hampton, in his late 50s, has been a tour guide and taxi driver for over 20 years. He was born and grew up in Dominica, but lived for some time away from the island before returning and going into the tourism business. He describes himself as a “nature freak” and particularly enjoys fishing, birding and botany. He takes great pleasure in what he refers to as “product development... to find new things, get used to them and introduce others to these new things. I love to do that.” He sees himself as having played a role in popularizing attractions, particularly waterfalls, “that were not on the popular roster touristically [but] that have become part of the national landscape these days.” He told the story of ‘discovering’ one such waterfall after hearing about it from villagers who lived near to it:

What I do, when I have a little down time, I go into nature and just disappear and run into things that a lot of us take for granted. And that’s how I found Spanny’s Falls. I’d heard about it and been told about it, but never really paid any interest. Then one day I decided that I was just going to walk, I do that all the time. And I just bumped into something beautiful. And when I told a friend, he said, but there’s another one behind there. So ... I told myself I want to see the other one. And the hiking, climbing on trees, holding roots and going up and lo and behold, there’s another beautiful waterfall just behind ... not very far away. Just a little toughness, a little climb, a little willingness to really make some sacrifice, and it’s right there.

Having found potential attractions, however, there is sometimes work to be done to make nature tourism-ready. At one waterfall,

there was no trail going down, you had to rappel down, and we cleaned out the place because there were bottles and cans and everything and plastics, we cleaned that out. So even if [local people] were going there, it wasn’t well kept, but we went there and started doing that and now it’s pretty well maintained.

At Spanny’s Falls,

when we first went there, a hurricane had just passed and there were logs and logs and logs in both pools. And we put together a group of young men with chainsaws. We went up there and removed [the logs] and cleaned out the pools. So that's how much we love that area.

While he takes pleasure in showing people the unique beauty of the island of which he is so proud, he also enjoys being alone in nature:

I like to go out, just disappear. I do that all the time, just disappear, just go... Shell collecting, driftwood collection, I disappear on the beaches, walk... I like, I love to disappear, just go, just disappear into the wild.

5.3.3 Marlon

A third tour guide, Marlon, hails from the south-eastern part of Dominica. At the time of our interview he was 29 years old and had worked for approximately three years at an eco-resort close to his home village; he had been a tour guide for over a decade. He takes tourists to the popular attractions such as Trafalgar Falls and the Boiling Lake, but his specialty is tours of the region where he grew up. In particular,

I give them garden tours, herbs, traditional medicinal herbs, tours, heritage tours of our culture, our arrowroot making, our cassava, our bay-oil making...

Much of what he shares with visitors on these tours he learned from his elders.

The medicinal herbs ... well I learned that through my father. My father is a herbalist in the village and I raise up with him, so I raise up with that culture.

Outside of tour guiding, he is a farmer, descended from a line of farmers:

I'm a farmer, you know... And that always brings us in nature, you know? Because we have to be in the soil, and then we have to know the moon, and the cycles, yes? I come from that. Because ... my father, my great-grandfather, he used to help to make the calendar, you know, on the estate, on the plantation.

Asked about how the introduction of an eco-resort and the increasing number of tourists in the area has affected the way local people think about nature, Marlon said

I find it makes people appreciate nature more. Because they, while they are making their *toloma*, people come in and enquire and they're always happy to explain to them, you know? It's like, they find a joy in it, if they doing their gardening and people come and check it out and they explain how they plant that and what moon [to plant by] and whatever, you know? So it lets them appreciate what they're doing a bit more too.

5.3.4 Kate

The fourth individual whose perspective I will share is not a tour guide, but a hotelier. Kate runs a small award-winning inn, surrounded by gardens; she refers to the entire property, which occupies 5 acres, as a wilderness retreat and nature sanctuary. Originally from the United States, she has lived in Dominica for over 50 years. Before she established the gardens,

there was nothing here... There was a hill and there was an old farmer who owned the property and he had a pig swamp.

She planted the gardens and had begun to develop "a little package, a couple of rooms, a restaurant" when Hurricane David, a category 5 storm, struck the island in 1979 and "blew everything away". She describes the process of rebuilding after the hurricane:

We rebuilt, we rebuilt it better. The hurricane, it came up the valley and took all the soil. All we had, all you could see were bare cliffs. And after it, I just reworked the whole contour of the land because it was bare. So I spent years making drains and terraces and so. [When you visit] you don't know, there a lot [of work that's been put into the site]. It was a hill and in order to catch the erosion, I spent a lot of time building terraces to catch it where it comes down and composting and saving the soil and so. And you know studying, you know the sun rises at 10 o'clock and it sets at 4 o'clock over there, except in February... So you know, I've got many niches for different things, different plant

families. The gardens are really good, they're recognized internationally.

When asked why she chose to call her property a wilderness retreat, she explains,

Well, very early on, I intended to keep it, to keep all the indigenous everything and to protect it.

And further,

You chose to put yourself someplace and I chose to put myself in someplace that was green and there was a possibility to save it, nurture it, protect it.

From the four preceding accounts, we see that tourism in Dominica has had an influence on how seasoned tourism practitioners relate to nature. But this influence does not seem to have resulted in the inability to appreciate nature in terms other than those related to its value as a commodity. Indeed it is clear from these accounts that people feel a strong sense of care for the nature with which they interact through tourism work: they are enamoured with it, it's their passion, they love it, they nurture it, they find a joy in it.

We also see the ways in which, for each tourism practitioner, tourism natures in Dominica offer different experiences and thus foster different understandings of and orientations to nature.

For Bruce, an important aspect of relating to nature is to have factual knowledge about nature, information which allows one to explain what some aspects of nature—the tropical rainforest, to use his own example—“really is”. But also important is the physical, embodied experience of nature, as indicated by his account of being in the dense rainforest, or of the need to swim through Ti Tou Gorge in order to get the full experience of it. The feeling of being immersed in and completely surrounded by nature is a key element of his description of both these experiences. It is perhaps this sense

of immersion that is central to his understanding of natures, touristic and otherwise: even outside the rainforest, wherever we are,

nature is everything around you... nature is always there... we don't exist outside of nature (interview with Bruce, Dominica, June 2009).

Compared to the sense of experience via immersion communicated by Bruce, Hampton's accounts of tourism natures seems to highlight the quality of encounter. One goes out, "disappear[s] into the wild"; while out there one happens upon nature, "bump[s] into something beautiful", and it is via these encounters that tourism natures emerge. From Hampton's narrative we get a sense of how tourism natures in Dominica are produced via the initial encounter and the subsequent process of enhancement (a process he characterizes as a labour of love). For Hampton, nature tourism allows him to share with others this process of discovery, of encounter with nature, and it also allows him the thrill of re-discovery each time he visits a site.

Again, as with Bruce, we can see the characteristics of this relationship with Dominica's tourism natures reflected in Hampton's understanding of nature in general. He spoke of how nature can be, in a sense, produced by human action, and how naturalness is, to some extent, defined by and at the moment of encounter:

You can come into an area like this [our interview took place in the Botanic Gardens on the outskirts of Roseau] and bring plants. It may not be, it may not have been natural before, but being here for so long ... generations who did not see it like it was before, coming here and to see it now, to them it's natural (interview with Hampton, Dominica, June 2009).

Of the four persons whose perspectives I present here, it is Marlon who perhaps best exemplifies what is often characterized as the 'traditional' relationship to nature. It does not appear that this traditional relationship has been markedly impaired by his decade of work in the tourism industry. Rather it informs his tourism practice and allows him to introduce a new element to Dominica's tourism natures, a nature rooted in the practices of

agriculture, practices that he considers key aspects of the country's culture and heritage. Once again, we see this orientation indicated in how he talks about what nature is:

I think nature is everything, everything around us ... our environment is nature, because *that's what we're growing up in.*" [emphasis mine] (interview with Marlon, Dominica, June 2009)

This is not to be interpreted as a naive assumption that everyone grows up in the same sort of nature. He is fully aware that "some places have nature on a different level, because they are more city". Rather, his statement here is indicative of how his perspectives on what nature is arise from experience, from what he has been "raised up" in.

Kate's relationship to nature bears some similarities to Marlon's, in that it has developed by working the land, albeit growing mostly decorative plants rather than agricultural crops and medicinal herbs. It is evident that this work has led to an intimate and practical knowledge of nature in her retreat: the microclimates of the site, its topography, the cycle of sunrise and sunset, the changes that occur over the course of a day and of a year.

In addition, speaking to Kate about her gardens leads to an awareness of the human effort that has gone into producing this natural attraction. This awareness that was heightened by time spent working in the gardens and becoming aware of the many ways in which the site has been altered: paths have been created, water flows captured and redirected, vegetation planted and cultivated, slopes built up or levelled. This realization leads to a greater awareness of the role human action and intervention play more generally in shaping and producing natural attractions in Dominica. Sites are found, explored, and their safety, accessibility, and touristic appeal assessed. They are cleaned up and cleared. Paths are cut, made safe, monitored and maintained. Viewing points are constructed. Items of potential interest are researched and denoted as such, made visible, perhaps marked with interpretive labels. All of these activities, part of the backstage activity of nature-tourism, involve work on the part of Dominicans, practical

interactions and engagements that shape and colour their understandings of and relationships to nature.

One of my aims in presenting the voices and perspectives of these individuals is to draw attention, by means of a few instances, to the variety that exists in how local people think about, experience and relate to tourism natures in Dominica. I have chosen to discuss particular elements of the quotes I have presented, but even in these brief extracts from longer interviews about nature, there are other aspects that could be highlighted—indeed, it is likely that the reader can think of points or details that caught their attention and that they feel I have neglected.

It is some of these very details and nuances that are at risk of being lost or overlooked in academic generalizations about how modern Western notions and discourses of nature affect local population and their traditional relationship to the natural world. It should not be inferred from my so saying that I idealize people's personal and particular relationships to nature as being invulnerable to external influence and the effects of discourse. For although Marlon identifies as a farmer like his father and great-grandfather before him, the fact remains that his way of making a living from nature is very different from that of his ancestors, and that this difference is firmly grounded in the emergence, in Dominica, the Caribbean, and the wider world, of new discourses of nature, notably the discursive shift in which nature becomes a site of leisure rather than of labour. Considering that almost every farmer I spoke to in Dominica was transforming, or considering transforming, her or his farm into a site of tourism nature, it would be disingenuous of me to deny the influence of the prevailing discourse. However, it seems equally important to point out that each farmer had their own ideas, based in their own relationships and experiences, of what the new tourism nature would be, do and mean for her/himself and for the tourists who came to experience it. My argument, then, is not that tourism discourses do not have a generalized or generalizable influence on people's relationships with nature. It is that scholars should take care that the making of such generalizations does not discount or obscure the multiplicity of ways

in which both 'Western' and 'local' people think about and relate to nature; such discounting does a disservice to tourism participants in both source and destination countries. Further to this, generalizing discussions are problematic when they decry the impacts of nature tourism or ecotourism on local perceptions of, constructions of and relationships with nature without giving attention, from an emic rather than etic perspective, to what these perceptions, constructions and relationships actually are.

Another point that I wish to draw from these interview excerpts is that nature-based tourism is not just an ideational vehicle for discourses about nature and the environment. It is also a practice, or rather it necessarily involves a range of practices, actual embodied engagements with nature. These practices allow for the demonstration of particular knowledges and conceptions of nature, and they can also generate such knowledge and influence such conceptions; from these tourism practices, knowledge and meaning emerge, and through them knowledge and meaning are expressed.

5.4 Presenting nature in Dominica: two nature tours

Up to this point the practices discussed have been those related to the 'backstage' (MacCannell, 1999[1976]) of nature tourism, to activities and practices to which the tourist is not generally exposed, but which are integral to the production of the touristic nature that the visitor experiences. I turn my attention now to a decidedly 'front-stage' practice, the guided nature tour, and give consideration to how these tours involve the performance, practice and presentation of nature in Dominica.

The empirical data presented in this regard was mainly obtained from observant participation in two guided tours of nature. The first was a bus tour that included a trip through the Botanic Gardens in Roseau (the capital of Dominica) followed by a journey up to Laudat, Dominica's highest village, and a stop and swim at the nearby Ti Tou Gorge. (You may recall the Ti Tou Gorge having been mentioned as one of Bruce's favourite nature spots in

Dominica; it was his recommendation that I should experience the Gorge for myself by participating in this tour, which was run by his tour company.) The second was an aerial tram tour, in which participants were transported through the rainforest canopy in suspended gondolas at a site also in the vicinity of Laudat. The first tour is presented via extracts from my field notes for the day, and the second via transcribed excerpts of a video recording made during the tour.

My contemplation of these tours was stimulated by Bruce's remarks about understanding nature, appreciating it, communicating it and knowing what it "really is". Thus my interest throughout the rest of this chapter is in different types of knowledge—local, scientific, experiential—of nature, and in how these knowledges are cultivated, expressed and shared through tourism practice.

5.4.1 *Beginning at the Botanic Gardens*

We began the bus tour with Curtis⁴, our guide and driver, in the Botanic Gardens, on the outskirts of Roseau. I have divided my presentation and discussion of this tour into two parts, one relating to the trip through the Gardens and up to Ti Tou Gorge, and the second relating to the interval at the Gorge itself.

The gardens began as an agricultural station with plants from all over the British Empire; experiments were carried out to see which species would grow successfully in Dominica. Some of the trees that can be observed in the gardens today are the banyan, originally from India, and the cannonball tree, from South America. There is also a large Baobab tree. The baobab is originally from West Africa. This particular tree was blown over during Hurricane David in 1979, and crushed a schoolbus (donated by the Canadian government) which had been parked underneath it. To this day, the bus remains wedged under the tree, which has continued to grow. All the conifers we see in the gardens are introduced species from North America.

⁴ Not his real name.

There is only one species of conifer that grows in Dominica naturally; it is the *podocarpus* or *wezinye montany*, which generally grows in the mountains. Another local tree found in the gardens is the logwood or *kanpèch*, which grows 20 or 30 feet tall in Dominica, but reaches a much larger size in the forests of South America. Flamboyants and false flamboyants can also be seen in the gardens, as can the *bwa kwaib*, which goes by the scientific name of *sabinea carinalis*. The *bwa kwaib* was chosen as the national tree because it is found only in Dominica. It is not in bloom now, but its blossom is Dominica's national flower.

...

In Laudat, Curtis pulls the bus close to the side of the road, and instructs us to pluck the white flowers that are in bloom on the plants lining the road. These are the white ginger. They are very delicate but, as we can smell, very fragrant. There are several varieties of ginger in Dominica, but this is the only one that grows there naturally. It is not the same as the ginger that is used for cooking, but it does have some medicinal value, as most gingers do.

...

Along the path to Ti Tou Gorge, we see a famous, or perhaps infamous tree. It's called in local the local *kwéyòl* language *bwa bande*, its scientific name is *Richeria grandis*. The bark is made into a tea that has a reputation as a male aphrodisiac (Author's field notes, Dominica, June 2009).

On this tour, the first introduction to nature in Dominica was not in the wild and ostensibly untouched zones of the forests and mountains, but in the urban and peri-urban areas of Roseau. Curtis's description of the Gardens alludes briefly to their colonial history; before they became a tourist attraction, the Gardens were one of the great achievements of the Dominica Agricultural Society. The 1897 West India Royal Commission report declared that the botanic station "which may be regarded as one of the most successful in the West Indies, has distributed 165,000 economic plants during the last six years" (West India Royal Commission, 1897:125). The Commission quoted the Leeward Islands Superintendent of Agriculture's

assertion that “the founding of the Botanic Station in Dominica will probably, in future years, be referred to as one of the greatest strides in the progress of that island during the present period” (West India Royal Commission, 1897:125). I have been told that the Gardens one sees today are a pale shadow of their former selves. Once acclaimed by visitors as among the best and most beautiful in the West Indies (Hodge, 1944a), the Gardens were ravaged by Hurricane David in 1979 and have never been fully restored to their previous glory. Nevertheless, they are counted among Dominica’s most visited tourist attractions.

Curtis’s presentation hints at how much of Dominica’s nature (and Caribbean nature in general) has been introduced “from all over the British Empire”. There is evidence of this both within and outside the boundaries of the Botanic Gardens. During our tour Curtis talked about and drew attention to the lime trees that once covered Bath Estate, the thickets of bamboo growing on the slopes as we made the ascent to Laudat, a cinnamon tree growing on a corner in Shawford, coffee plants growing along the road on our return trip to Roseau. These are all the results of European intervention, the introduction of species and specimens for economic or experimental purposes. I am reminded of Hampton’s remark about things that “may not have been natural before, but being here for so long [become] natural”.

Our nature tour with Curtis provided him with many opportunities to tell us about nature, to—and here I paraphrase Bruce—demonstrate his understanding of nature by providing us with factual information, in particular information about plants. In the following discussion, I take as my point of departure his joint presentation of different bodies of nature knowledge, that is, his presentation of botanical information using not only local *kwéyòl* names, but also the plants’ scientific names, the language of genus, family and species.

It has been argued that the scientization of nature tours and nature tourism interpretive programmes is a symptom of a growing global discourse of ecological rationalization (Jamal et al., 2003). For my part, the deployment of

scientific knowledge—and its juxtaposition with local knowledge—as a component of the nature tourism experience in Dominica, along with Bruce’s remarks (quoted earlier in this chapter) about knowledge, understanding and appreciation of nature, provoked reflection about different types of nature knowledges and their roles in people’s understandings of and relationships to nature.

5.4.2 Systems of nature knowledge: botany or society?

The Caribbean poet and Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott has fulminated against the adoption of Old-World botanical classification systems to describe nature in the Caribbean:

Here is an unknown plant. Take the arrogance of an Old World botanist naming this plant then, this one on the grass verge of the beach that I do not even have a name for, and I now believe that my ignorance is more correct than his knowledge, that my privilege makes it correct as quietly as Adam’s, or Crusoe’s and that what it reminds me of, its metaphor, is more important than the family it springs from. A whole method of our learning has been founded on this acceptance, but eventually the botanically correct and Latin-tagged label or, even worse, the tag with the name of the “discoverer” disappears; it keeps its creole or country name according to its properties, and without properties, medicinal, magical, or edible, without use it remains anonymous, always to be rediscovered, to remain looking like something else. But in our literature, it assumes a dead life, a glassed-in imitation of its superiors, and is proud to be a second-rate marigold, or daisy, or crocus. Around it, the anonymous vines and thick-eared vegetation look illiterate. That is not botany, it is society; it is our opinion of refinement. ...As the moment of naming by that botanist is the beginning of that specimen’s official history; we have accepted our history as a succession of such moments (Walcott, 2005:56-57).

The “arrogance of the Old World botanist” ‘discovering’ and naming a plant on the grass verge of a Caribbean beach is akin to the arrogance of the Old World explorer ‘discovering’ and naming the Caribbean itself. Walcott takes issue with a framework of knowledge that has established the moment of

Old World encounter as the moment of discovery, the point of origin, the beginning of the region's "official history". I wish to extend his argument in another direction.

Walcott writes that his privilege grants his ignorance a correctness equal to or exceeding that of the Old World botanist's knowledge, but the more compelling contest is not between hypothetical indigenous ignorance and non-native knowledge, but between knowledge that is local and knowledge that is foreign, between the "creole or country name" and the "botanically correct ... label". From this perspective, the offence, as it were, would not be that Dominica's national flower, for example, becomes a kind of "second-rate marigold", but that it becomes *Sabinea carinalis* rather than remaining *bwa kwaib*; it is that botanical systems of genus, family and species might come to be thought of as explicative of what Dominica's vegetation actually is.

Walcott's remark that "that is not botany, it is society" is reminiscent of the argument in the discipline of ethnobiology about whether or not species (and family and genera) "are products of the human imagination, mental creations comparable in their reality to any other social or cultural construct" (Berlin, 1992:11). One view, derived from the philosophy of John Locke (1894; Woolhouse, 1971), is that categories and systems of biological classification are social constructs, culturally particular, relative rather than absolute or essential. Another holds that while there may be some cultural variation in classification systems—i.e. the properties and characteristics used as the basis of classification may vary—all such systems necessarily and fundamentally have their origin in an objective biological reality, an overarching pattern that has been referred to as the 'natural system' (Berlin, 1992).

It seems to me that whichever position one takes, whether pluralist or positivist, local taxonomies and terminologies for Dominica's plant life are indeed "correct as quietly" as the standard botanical classification and naming. If one is inclined towards the relativist view, this is so because, for the most part, any one coherent system of classification may be considered as

valid as any other. From the essentialist perspective, it is so because, to quote Berlin

human beings everywhere are constrained in essentially the same ways—by nature’s basic plan—in their conceptual recognition of the biological diversity of their natural environments. ...they do not construct order, they discern it (Berlin, 1992:8).

That is to say, while systems of classification may vary, each system is nevertheless reflective of actual properties that the items possess. There are perhaps those who would argue that in talking of creole knowledge, we are dealing with a system of naming rather than, as in botany, a system of classification based on common properties. A response to this is that *bwa kwaib*, for instance, is not a proper name or a singular word, but a general word. It identifies individual plants as being instances of a certain sort, that is, of a class of plants that have been determined to share identifiably common properties that allow them to be grouped together under a collective heading. That is, the very name of a type of plant is an act of classification based on common properties.

My goal here is not merely to champion the validity of local knowledge (whether Kalinago or creole) relative to Western scientific—and in this specific case, botanical—knowledge, but to contemplate the implications for relationships to nature, particularly as it relates to what has been referred to a science-based approach to the appreciation of nature. One of the foremost proponents of this approach is environmental philosopher Allen Carlson, who has argued that “common sense/scientific knowledge” (2004:71) are essential to the proper aesthetic appreciation of nature. Such knowledge, he proposes, “gives us the appropriate foci of aesthetic appreciation and the appropriate boundaries of the setting so that our experience becomes one of aesthetic appreciation” (Carlson, 2004:71).

One of the questions that arises in this regard is, as Emily Brady (2003) has pointed out, that of what constitutes scientific knowledge. A corresponding question would be: what constitutes commonsense knowledge? How much

does one have to know, what depth of commonsense or scientific knowledge must one possess, in order for that knowledge to provide a sound basis for the correct aesthetic appreciation of nature? Further to this—and this is the question that particularly concerns me—what is the relationship between commonsense and scientific knowledge?

One challenge to the science-based model relates to the suitability of science as the basis for knowing and understanding nature on its own terms. This challenge has been posed with reference to science's anthropocentricity (Saito, 2004), but further criticism arises from the position, held by some scholars, that science is not universal and objective, but socially constructed and culturally produced (Agrawal, 1995; Harding, 2006). From this perspective, science is culturally specific, and therefore not a suitable basis, or at least not a universally suitable basis, for understanding and therefore appropriately appreciating nature on its own terms.

Saito proposes that “(natural history) science in the strict Western sense does not have a monopoly on the effort to ‘make sense of’ nature’s various phenomena and objects” (Saito, 2004:150), and that other appropriate ways of knowing nature might include “myths, folklore and indigenous tales” (Saito, 2004:150). But again, I find myself concerned about the status of these other ways of knowing relative to natural history science in the Western sense.

I return to Carlson, who has written of “the commonsense predecessors and analogues of science” (1995:399) and of knowledge at “the commonsense end of the spectrum ranging from science to its commonsense analogues” (1995:399). Here, the use of the term predecessors suggests that the spectrum is perhaps closer to being a hierarchy, in which commonsense knowledge is a less refined, more rudimentary kind of understanding than scientific knowledge. Whether hierarchy or spectrum, the problem remains that the boundary between science and commonsense/non-science can be difficult to determine (Agrawal, 1995). In any case, assuming that local knowledge has a place on this spectrum, what is its standing relative to scientific knowledge and/or common sense?

Another point for consideration is that it is unlikely that an individual's body of knowledge will be exclusively traditional or exclusively scientific (Agrawal, 1995; Sillitoe, 1998; Ellen and Harris, 2000; Watson and Huntington, 2008). If one has both creole or Kalinago knowledge and scientific knowledge of some aspect of nature, does one take precedence over the other as a means of appreciating nature? Or, to incorporate Saito's (2004) approach, if one has both folkloric and scientific knowledge of nature, does one provide a better basis than the other for the appreciation of nature?

During an interview with Joe (who was introduced in chapter 4), I asked if he had learned new things about nature through his work as a tour guide. His response was as follows:

No, I didn't learn about nature through my work, I learned mostly from growing up as a Carib and talking with my elders. My work has taught me scientific knowledge, but before that I already had natural knowledge and legendic knowledge. For example, when I got into tour guiding I knew this was a *gommyé* tree used for boats and so, but now I know that the *gommyé* is the *Crius excelsiur*. Now I know that the *foufou* hummingbird is a Lesser Caribbean Crested [sic]⁵. So my knowledge has become more scientifically improved, if you want to say that.

Earlier, he had told me that

Also a [non-Kalinago] guide would go on tours and tell you, this is a hummingbird, we have four kinds of hummingbird in Dominica and this is this particular kind. In Carib legend, you have the little hummingbird, the Lesser Caribbean Crested [sic], who has a crown on his head. So you tell people a story: do you know that the Caribbean Crested is so designed because of his involvement with x y and z, his involvement with God, his working with the earth, etc.? And the male has a crown and the female doesn't have a crown? And you tell them the stories and legends behind that, and people like those things, you entertain them; you tell them it's a legend and they will say, well even if it's a legend it seems to be true.

⁵ The Antillean Crested hummingbird (*Orthorhyncus cristatus*).

Has Joe's ability to appreciate and understand the hummingbird been augmented by his "scientifically improved" knowledge? Is the tourists' appreciation and understanding of the hummingbird improved by their acquisition of some of Joe's "legendic knowledge"? Is it possible that these alternatives are not mutually exclusive, that both of the preceding questions could be answered in the affirmative?

It is worth noting that in 1952 Taylor wrote "Dominica has four species of hummingbird, each with its Creole or Carib name; the smallest of these [is] known as *foufou* in Creole and *ioróttó* in Carib..." (Taylor, 1952:269).⁶ The bird's 'Carib name' was never mentioned during my interview with Joe; it would seem that he grew up, as a Kalinago raised in the Carib Territory, knowing it by its Creole name. What are we to make of this, in terms of arguments about which kinds of knowledge provide the best basis for appreciating nature, not to mention in terms of arguments about indigenous knowledge and authenticity (Nazarea, 2006)?

My principal objective in this discussion has not been to refute the science-based model of nature appreciation. (In any case, Thomas Heyd (2004) has already done that, arguing along the same lines as I, in his essay on "Aesthetic Appreciation and the Many Stories about Nature".) Rather, my interest is in how consideration of the model and its subsequent critiques explicitly open up opportunities for thoughtful discussion of the role, function and validity of different types of knowledge as means of relating to nature and as bases for appreciating nature.

⁶ Taylor also recounts the story of how the *ioróttó*/*foufou*/ Antillean Crested hummingbird got his crown:

When Híali [who founded the Carib nation] was little, *ioróttó*—the little *foufou*—took him to the sky that his father [the moon, who was once human] might see him. As a reward for this service, he was given his beautiful feathers and the little cap he wears on top of his head to this day. (Taylor, 1952:269)

Returning to the use of western scientific knowledge systems as a means of presenting Dominica's nature to tourists, it should be evident that I am wary of suggestions that scientific knowledge provides a better, sounder or more valid representation of what nature in Dominica really is. However, I am not in favour of a stance that characterizes tourism practitioners' espousal of such knowledge as an example of how tourism insidiously impairs people's traditional relationships to nature by eroding local knowledge, which is assumed to be more authentic. I think that there is a need for more considered analyses of how newer or introduced knowledges differ in kind and in function from older, traditional knowledges, and of the consequences for people's perceptions and experiences of nature. (I undertake such an analysis in chapter 7.) Meanwhile, Dominicans (both those working in tourism and others) are finding their own ways to navigate and negotiate the spectrum of knowledge ranging from scientific to commonsense, through pluralistic and constantly evolving processes of accommodation.

5.4.3 Full bodied nature: Ti Tou Gorge

I return my attention now to the nature tour with Curtis, describing and discussing the visit to the Ti Tou Gorge.

Now at Ti Tou Gorge, we'll have a chance to experience both warm and cold water in the same place. Our swim in the Gorge will be a transformative experience; we'll really feel different afterwards. Once we have put on our life jackets, we are given instructions as to how to negotiate the Gorge, swimming against the flow of the upstream torrent. The best approach is to keep close to the sides, finding holds in the rough rock faces by grasping with the fingertips, bracing against the walls and pushing off strongly with the feet to move forward against the force of the water. As we proceed, we can enjoy the beauty of the light filtering down through the trees above, and coming in through cracks in the walls of the gorge. At the base of the waterfall, there are a number of experiences that we can partake in, some of which our guide demonstrates: for a rest, we can perch on ledges outside of the direct flow, or find a relatively calm spot in a shallow pool where one can stand and feel the eddies from the fall swirling against your body,

or we can dive and cannonball into the turbulence at the waterfall's base where the water is quite deep, or move into the middle of the stream and try to swim forward against the buffeting force of the waterfall's flow—something best attempted by the young and strong. Or we can dive below the water, kicking blindly downwards with arm extended ahead of you in hope of gathering up some crayfish from the bottom, the way our guide used to do when he was a boy. Whatever we do, we should take the opportunity to feel the water's flow (Author's field notes, Dominica, June 2009).

The tour of Ti Tou Gorge provides a vivid example of the embodied experience of tourism nature in Dominica. It brings into sharp focus the way that tourism involves embodied practice and provides a starting point for discussion of how the bodily practices of tourism constitute a relationship with nature.

The Ti Tou Gorge swim was notable for the sense of being completely immersed in the natural world. For much of the tour we were in direct full-body contact with the water in the Gorge, separated only by our swimsuits and, thankfully, our flotation devices. Our guide enjoined us to feel the flow of the water, but my sensation was more one of the water's force. It was a profoundly tactile and haptic experience. But of course, the senses do not function individually of each other (Rodaway, 1994) and the overall experience of the Gorge encompassed other sensory experiences: of the earthy smell of soil and decaying vegetation, of the dimness inside the gorge, of the glow of the sunlight filtering through the foliage and reflecting off the water, of the echoey stillness of being in a canyon, of the rushing sounds of water from the falls, and even of the taste of an unexpected mouthful of water.

For the tourists who visited that day, including myself, Ti Tou Gorge was variously experienced as exhilarating, exhausting and exclusionary (one tour participant was compelled to forgo the swim through the Gorge because of mobility issues). It was an experience that unsettled, at least temporarily, the usual subject-object relationship between my self and the non-human world; it infringed upon the "borders that sustain the security of human

subjectivities as separate from the natural world" (Waitt and Cook, 2007:546-547). I hope that my account of it also infringes on academic representations of tourism in which nature is generalized as being a passive object presented for detached and leisurely human consumption. The consideration of nature tourism and ecotourism as embodied, as well as emplaced, practice, rather than as an industry or institution, would be helpful in expanding our concepts and understanding of how tourism brings people into relationship with nature and the non-human world.

While the tour at Ti Tou Gorge involved an especially rich and immersive encounter with the natural world, it was not an isolated example of tour guides directing visitors towards sensuous engagements with nature. On this tour and others, guides encouraged interactions with nature that involved all the senses. Attention was drawn to the various calls of birds in the forests or to the peaceful absence of (man-made) sound. Guides gave tourists things to hold, touch and smell (see Figure 7): an ylang ylang flower, a fragment of cinnamon bark, a leaf of lemongrass, ginger flowers, a cocoa pod, coffee beans, the sticky fruit of a forest tree, a sharp blade of razor grass.

Guides smeared visitors with mud, challenged them to test the temperature of hot springs with their bodies, instructed them on how to keep their balance while clambering over the boulders at Trafalgar Falls. Tourists were encouraged to swing from the vine-like roots of a strangler fig in the forest, advised on how to carefully negotiate a slippery path down the hill to the beach at Salybia in the Carib Territory (and when I fell ignominiously on my backside, I was helped up and told reassuringly, "Don't worry, that's all a part of it; we call that the Carib dance!"). Guides drew attention (although in this case the guidance was not entirely necessary) to the sulphurous odours in Wotten Waven and the Valley of Desolation. They offered tastes of the natural products of Dominica: mangoes, sugar cane, bananas, oranges, coconut jelly, and fresh water from roadside springs.



Figure 7: Dominican produce (cocoa, coffee, bay, thyme, lemongrass) laid out for tourists to see, handle and smell (photo by author)

In so doing, they guided visitors towards a multisensory engagement with the natural world and thus produced nature—and Dominica, the nature island—as they (the guides) themselves know it, as more than mere landscape, as a nature that makes contact with, acts upon, and even enters into the body.

5.4.4 Everyday tourism, everyday natures

Geographers have previously given some attention to the embodied practices of tourism and how they shape people's knowledge of place and understandings of the relationship between self and world (Crouch, 2000; Edensor, 2001; Cloke and Cater, 2007; Edensor, 2007; Obrador-Pons, 2007; Waitt and Cook, 2007), but these have tended to focus on the practices of the tourist rather than those of the local people who are also actively involved in doing tourism. One of the differences between the practice of the tourist and

that of the tour guide is that the tourists' engagement with the tourist site is marked, to some extent, by a sense of novelty, of escape from everyday life, whereas for the tour guide, these engagements *are* everyday life.

In the discipline of human geography, interest in embodiment and the everyday have been, to some extent, amalgamated under the rubric of non-representational theory. In the words of two of its foremost proponents, non-representational theory

emphasizes the flow of practice in everyday life as embodied... In other words, non-representational theory sees everyday life as chiefly concerned with the on-going creation of effects through encounters ... a non-representational outlook depends upon understanding and working with the everyday as a set of skills... (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000:415).

One aspect of this is an attention to the body as a site and source of knowledge, and to the ways in which, through embodied experiences, encounters and engagements, we come to know our world, to make sense of it, and to grasp meaning in it (Thrift, 2000; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Harrison, 2000). Thus Dominican tour guides' knowledge of nature lies not only in their possession of a general body of information about the natural world, but in their active, personal, empirical acquaintance with that world. In the domain of environmental philosophy, this feature of the non-representational approach is expressed by Cheryl Foster (2004) in terms of being

willing to enlarge what we think of as knowledge to include the individual's perceptual acquaintance with ... the natural environment, and [to] support the validity of such knowledge in our account of ... value (Foster, 2004:198).

Such an enlargement is important because "via the senses we can encounter that which stretches *beyond* textbook propositions into a full knowledge by acquaintance" (Foster, 2004:205).

A second complementary point of view draws attention not primarily to the embodied nature of practice, but to its everyday-ness, to “the consistency of habit” (Harrison, 2000:505). It is the routine repetition of embodied action and interaction that firmly configures our worlds, making it possible to establish a relatively stable set of ideas and relations, as “the habitual patterns of everyday bodily practice give[] rise to the potential conditions of truth and the end of doubt” (Harrison, 2000:508).

An exploration of how routine and habitual practice play out in the practice of tourism can be found in the work of Tim Edensor, who has pointed out the ways in which tourist practices are “imbricated with the mundane and quotidian” (Edensor, 2007:211). In doing so he adapts Ingold and Kurttila’s (2000) notion of taskscapes to formulate the idea of ‘touristscapes’ (and here I would substitute *tourismscapes*, to reflect the reality that tourism is more than what tourists do). Tourismscapes are tourism spaces

apprehended through ... mundane routines and sensations ... and enmeshed in the performance of predictable and habitual routines undertaken by people who possess a practical, unreflexive knowledge of such spaces (Edensor, 2007:206).

Edensor draws attention to the “material, spatial, knowledge and organizational networks that allow tourism to be carried out” (2007:203). Travel brochures, guidebooks, packaged tour itineraries and the like all serve to demonstrate to tourists how to do tourism, how to perform their tourist role and how to interact with the spaces and places they visit. Tourists are thus habituated to the practices of tourism. Tour guides support and reinforce norms of tourism behaviour (Salazar, 2006; Edensor, 2007; Waitt and Cook, 2007), but they are also subject to those norms. Thus, when the tourist and the tour guide meet at the tourism site, they are both enmeshed in networks that establish the conventions of tourism practice. However, unlike tourists, tour guides in Dominica are specifically and explicitly taught how to do tourism and how to negotiate and navigate the touristic spaces of the nature island. They are instructed in how to inhabit and perform Dominica’s tourismscapes, which are for them taskscapes; their relationship to nature in

Dominica is shaped by and generally conforms to stipulated and standardized guidelines.

In Edensor's account, modern mass tourism renders touristic activities conventional and mundane, and it has the same effect on tourism destinations. This global sameness gives tourists a sense of familiarity and stability, lending an air of routine to their embodied tourism practices and a sense of mundanity to tourism places, such that if one knows how to be a tourist in Costa Rica or Belize or the islands of the South Pacific—all places identified by Dominicans as being touristically comparable with Dominica—then one knows also how to be a tourist in Dominica.

But for the Dominican tour guide, it is not acquaintance with some generalized global nature that facilitates and informs her easy negotiation of Dominica's natural attractions; it is the familiarity that arises from routine embodied practice in the specific spaces and places of Dominica. For the tour guide nature in Dominica is, quite literally, quotidian, but this does not equate to its being generic.

While habit has been associated with implicit, unreflexive knowledge of the spaces in question—in this case the natural domains of Dominica—this is not entirely the case for the tour guide, whose job it is to make her knowledge, including her embodied knowledge, explicit for the benefit of the tourist. Thus guides are able to describe for us the bodily manoeuvres necessary to negotiate Ti Tou Gorge, to give instructions on how to spot the bird that is concealed in the leaf litter on the forest floor, to indicate the best place and way to cross a river, to anticipate the more difficult portions of the hike to the Boiling Lake and advise on how to traverse them, to teach visitors how to maintain their footing on steep slippery hillside, and to instruct them on how to recognize the variety, diversity and liveliness of the Dominican rainforest.

5.4.5 A different perspective: the rainforest by tram

On that note, I turn my attention to the second tour, the aerial tour of the rainforest on the outskirts of Laudat. This tour was video and audio-recorded, and the passages below are extracts from those recordings. The speaker is our guide, Reynold⁷.

Okay, on the right hand side we have a medicinal plant, the one with the big round leaves here, it's called *Graffenrieda*. *Graffenrieda*. Traditionally, it's used as a poultice and for headaches. Locally we called it the *kwe kwe gwan fe*. We have our own native language, a Creole, and all the plants and animals have a Creole name. So the ferns, we called the ferns *fwijé*.

Okay, this large tree on the left hand side, locally we call it a *chatannyé*, but the scientific name is— oh, see that animal down there, walking in the ground floor, that's what we call the agouti. As I was saying, locally the *chatannyé* is called the queen of the forest, because its roots, the buttress roots, look like a lady's skirt and no tree in the forest has a larger crown. So we have the queen of the forest and the king. We call the king *gommyé*. That's the one we use to make the dugout canoes. The king doesn't have the large buttress roots or the large crown either, but no tree will grow taller than a king; it grows to 140, 150 feet tall. And if you look at the leaves when they fall on the ground, the leaves curl up into the shape of little canoes. Hear a bird like a pigeon, that's the wild pigeon, locally we call it the *wanmyé*, it lives mostly in the forest.

...

Look, there is a king of the forest, easy to identify, and a queen growing by it, that's his wife there! And the long roots you see coming down like cable, these are from a strangler fig. It is not a liana. Lianas germinate down and they grow upwards, they need support to grow up, but the strangler fig needs no support, they just grow down through the air. The lianas are woody and the strangler figs are more flexible. When I was a boy playing in the forest, one of the things I would do for fun is to swing on the strangler figs. But ... never swing

⁷ Not his real name.

on a liana growing upwards, because the youngest softest parts are at the top, and you will fall.

...

There are four mountains in Dominica over 4,000 feet tall. The fourth highest mountains is the youngest dormant volcano, it's the last volcano that erupted in Dominica, about 10,000 years ago, the scientists say. Scientists love big numbers, they never say ten years, or 20...

...

Yes, I studied all this, but some things, like the trees, I knew them from since I was a small age. I know a lot of the trees because I grew up around the forest area and my grandfather was a builder of the canoes, he was a Carib Indian and he used to build the canoes, so I used to always be in the forest and from young I knew the names of the trees. I didn't know the scientific names, but I knew the local names.

Returning to the topic of knowledge, one of the most striking things about this tour—one that was remarked upon by my fellow tourists, prompting Reynold's response in the last transcribed paragraph above—was the volume of information imparted to us by the guide, and the amount he knew about the forest through which we were travelling. As he told us, he has had to study the subject, in order to qualify to do his job. In addition to the state-mandated certification, he has received training from the company that employs him, and has had to familiarize himself with a handbook, approximately 50 pages in length, prepared by a visiting botanist and containing both scientific and traditional knowledge about the rainforest and its flora and fauna.

It was a testament to Reynold's skill as a guide that it was not always evident when the information he was sharing had been acquired from the training manual and when it had arisen from his experience growing up in the Carib Territory in rural Dominica. In some portions of his presentation he foregrounded the characteristics of creole knowledge, as identified by Derek

Walcott (2005): metaphor (the king of the forest and his wife the queen), identification of properties (the various medicinal uses of plants) and sometimes a combination of both (the trees whose canoe-shaped leaves hint at the use made of its wood). In other instances—for example a lengthy description (not quoted above) of the difference between epiphytes, hemi-epiphytes and parasites—the knowledge he shared seemed clearly to be of the scientific type. But overall, both were integrated into a cohesive and compelling local account of Dominica's flora and fauna. A prime example of this is the way in which description of the difference between the germination patterns of lianas and strangler figs was contextualized by the explanation of which one makes the better swing for little boys playing in the forests.

Having said this, I draw attention to an occasion when Reynold himself highlighted a particular piece of knowledge as being scientific: "...it's the last volcano that erupted in Dominica, about 10,000 years ago, the scientists say. Scientists love big figures, they never say ten years, or 20..."

This passing remark suggests a certain blithe scepticism about a scientific claim, but I would posit that this is not representative of scepticism about scientific knowledge in general. Rather, I propose that it is indicative of how certain types of scientific knowledge fit into and with existing frameworks of 'commonsense' Dominican knowledge.

Botanical knowledge of the types displayed on the tours discussed here is, I suggest, more readily assimilated and embraced because it is similar in kind to local knowledge. It gives names to things, distinguishes them based on their properties, and makes observations about their characteristics and behaviour. It can be confirmed by observation in the real world. It is practical and verifiable, and as such is congruent in type with local knowledge of nature. Knowledge about the age of Dominica's volcanos is not, from the commonsense point of view, verifiable, nor does it have any immediately evident practical use. This is not to say that it is incompatible with or contradictory to existing local frameworks of knowledge, but it is perhaps of

less interest or relevance within those frameworks than is knowledge about the names and observable attributes of flora and fauna.

I make no claim that what I have proposed above is a definitive explanation, just one possible interpretation. Nonetheless, we see clearly from Reynold's remarks about what 'scientists say' that scientific knowledge is not adopted uncritically, nor is the knowledge imparted via the tourism education process simply taken and re-presented as given. In addition to the academic attention paid to the introduction of Western frameworks of knowledge and their influence on local traditions, a correspondingly fruitful area of research would relate to the study of how local traditional frameworks of knowledge have an impact on the adaptive uptake and assimilation of scientific information.

With regard to the subject of embodiment and practice, I wish to point out that for the guides, even relatively passive touristic experiences of nature such as that involved in the aerial rainforest tour involve demonstrations of their proficient embodiment derived from familiarity and habitual acquaintance. As you might have noticed in the transcripts, Reynold was continually drawing to our attention particular sights and sounds of this or that plant, animal or bird. Relatively few of these sights were captured by my video, because I did not have the skill to observe the things in nature that he perceived with ease. Despite his efforts to point out a grey flycatcher perched close by, I just couldn't find it. Similarly, when he pointed out the sound of the cricket or the cooing of the *ramie*, it took me a long while to be able to discern those sounds from the general auditory ambience of the forest. Reynold, on the other hand, knew what to look and listen for in the forest. He was adept at seeing and hearing the forest, and he was intimately familiar with this particular portion of forest. His familiarity and his skilled perception are constituent aspects of his relationship with nature.



Figure 8: Aerial tram tour: *graffenrieda*, swinging from strangler figs on a *chatannyé*, Dominica's fourth highest mountain, Morne Micotrin (photos by author)

5.4.6 *Attending to the natural event*

This tour, which our guide might perform several times a day if the attraction is busy, might seem grounded in routine, with its fixed route and the inclusion of pre-programmed stops with associated items of interest. But the existence of a routine does not exclude, and indeed perhaps can be seen as generative of, the possibility of spontaneity. The world is neither stable nor static, and there is always the potential for “the intervention of an event” (Harrison, 2000:512), something happening that perturbs the routine and provokes new, improvised and potentially transformative performance (Harrison, 2000; Crouch, 2003b).

Proficiently guided tours of nature involve an attention to the interval, to the moments when something happens. With nature there is always the space for spontaneous occurrences—the agouti scurries into the undergrowth, a hummingbird hovers at eye level and then flits off, the mountain whistler utters a call. Our tour guide made use of these intervals in order to interpret nature for tourists; his skill as a guide lies not just in the interpretation, but also in his very alertness to the interval itself. In order to make the event an item of interest, he first has to notice that it is happening, he has to perceive the ways in which the forest continually changes around him. This includes not just momentary changes, but transformations that occur over a longer timescale: the yellow blossoms that he pointed out to us will be gone maybe by tomorrow or next week, the tree that is now being choked to death by a parasite was healthy last tourist season or the one before. Nature is in constant flux, offering something new from day to day, even from moment to moment. As Hampton told me, “I’ve been to the Boiling Lake hundreds of times, but when I go, it’s always something, there’s always a change ... there’s always the expectation of something different.” Tour guiding, the skilled touristic performance of nature, can cultivate, as well as demonstrate, this sensitivity to nature’s mutability.

The inherent variability of natural places and spaces is rife with intervals and events that punctuate habitual routines and allow for creative improvisation,

providing a multitude of opportunities for guides to share their perceptions, ideas, knowledge and experiences of nature in Dominica. The sight of a pair of parrots flying overhead in the evening provokes the observation that “You always see them flying in pairs, and when they find a partner, they are faithful for life.” A fallen tree across the road interrupts a journey, and the taxi driver says, with forbearance, “Well, that’s what happens with the steep slopes that we have, and we had some rain too that loosened the roots, but it looks like that guy has a chainsaw, so he’ll cut it away. See, in Dominica we’re always prepared for this sort of thing, you have to be prepared.” On the return trip from Ti Tou Gorge, a shower of brilliant blossoms from a pomerac tree covers the road ahead and the guide makes the whimsical remark that the tree “is putting out a pink carpet for us”. During the journey up to the aerial tram tour, a crab skitters across the road in front of the taxi and the driver muses nostalgically: “You see that? They have plenty crabs up here. When I was a boy, we would go by the river and pick up crabs in their numbers, but you can’t do that these days again, they have laws against taking crabs now...”

With these statements, elicited by spontaneous natural occurrences, guides do not just inform the tourist about nature; rather, they perform nature, interpreting it, and human relations therewith, according to their own understandings and via their own relationship with the natural world. Each of these instances, and of many others not documented here, fleeting and incidental, involves a spontaneous expression and exhibition of people’s relationships to nature in the nature island. These examples reveal how particular events and instances can provide us with a richer, multi-dimensional understanding of how people experience nature, of how they think and feel about nature and about their experiences, and of how they think and feel about the context in which those experiences take place. Unfortunately, they are also the sorts of examples that are often overlooked by scholarly treatments of nature-based tourism—and specifically ecotourism—as a vehicle for hegemonic discourses of neo-liberalism, ecological-economic rationalization, environmental governmentality and

green imperialism (Mowforth and Munt, 1998; Jamal et al., 2003; West and Carrier, 2004; Carrier and Macleod, 2005).

5.5 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this chapter is not intended to discredit such treatments or approaches, nor should it be seen as an endorsement of nature tourism in Dominica. By “redirect[ing] attention from the *posited meaning* towards the *material compositions and conduct*” (Dewsbury et al., 2002:438, emphases in original) of nature tourism I am not rejecting the idea that the wider socio-cultural context influences and informs how people, in their everyday doings, understand, experience and make sense of nature. Nor am I oblivious to the often problematic web of discourses that surround and affect the practice of nature tourism in Dominica.

However, these discourses do not simply overwrite local experiences, traditions, ideas, knowledges and practices. Thus, I believe that along with analysis of the discursive matrix of nature tourism, there is much to be gained from close attention to the details of actual tourism practices at the local level. Criticism of the hegemonic discourses that produce and sustain a “rational-instrumental perspective of the natural environment” (Jamal et al., 2003:162) has been accompanied by a call for “an eco-practice that is dynamic, interactive, and situated, one that permits the tourist [and, I would add, the tour guide] to experience the natural world through a bodily and embodied performative encounter with the places and spaces of nature” (Jamal et al., 2003:164). As this chapter has shown, such eco-practices and encounters take place routinely; in paying greater attention to these commonplace occurrences we learn about the kinds of relationships with, knowledges of and perspectives on nature that are formed, enacted, expressed and shared through nature tourism practice.

6 Natures in Practice

What you see,
what you hear,
what you taste,
what you smell,
what you feel on your skin,
and what you feel in your heart.

(Song sung by students at the St. Luke's Primary
School, Pointe Michel, Dominica)

Having discussed people's orientations to tourism natures in Dominica, I now move to discussion of how Dominicans relate to nature outwith the immediate context of tourism practice. In this chapter I follow in the footsteps of scholars (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998, 2001; Franklin, 2002; Crouch, 2003a) who have advocated for consideration of how nature is known and understood through and as a part of lived and felt experience. I focus on how people perceive nature as part of their day-to-day lives, how they think and talk about their perceptions, and how their perceptions imbue nature with personal meaning. In the first portion of the chapter I show some of the ways in which embodied sensory experience is a vital part of how people know, feel about, and think of nature in Dominica. In the latter portion I use three brief case studies to examine how nature is understood and acquires meaning and value through people's lived experiences. Here I emphasize what David Crouch has referred to as "idiosyncratic performativities" (2003b:1957), through which individuals make of nature something that is "significantly theirs" (Crouch, 2003b:1958).

6.1 Perceiving Nature

My discussion of perceptions of nature in Dominica is based primarily on three specific opportunities for encounter, although I will draw also on other general experiences from my time there. Data in this regard has been gathered via semi-structured interviews and participant observation.

In the first instance, I was afforded the opportunity to accompany officers from the Dominica Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division during three of their visits to the field. The Division's principal mandate is to ensure the "sustainable utilisation of the island's forest and national park resources" (Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, n.d.). Their work in this regard entails regular visits to the hills and forests of Dominica for routine surveillance, and monitoring, as well as to investigate suspected infringements of the Forestry and Wildlife Act. The functions and operations of the Division are discussed in greater detail in chapter 8. My first outing with the forest officers was a monitoring trip to the woods above the village of Pichelin; the second was to the area of Petit Coulibri for general surveillance; and the third was to monitor the Matthieu Lake in the heights above the villages of Layou and St. Joseph. This chapter draws mainly on experiences from the first and third field trips.

In the second case of nature encounter, I worked one day a week for five weeks in the gardens of the hotel operated by Kate (previously mentioned in chapter 5), assisting the regular gardening staff in the execution of their routine maintenance and upkeep activities. This work involved weeding, pruning and watering plants, as well as—as shall be discussed—tagging plants with labels indicating their botanical names.

The third engagement with nature occurred in the village of Giraudel. The neighbouring villages of Giraudel and Eggleston are renowned in Dominica for their flower production, and have been referred to as the 'flower basket of Dominica' (Pattullo and Jno Baptiste, 1998). The Giraudel-Eggleston Flower Growers Group is an association, made up predominantly of women—a few

members alluded to men's reluctance to engage in floriculture, and how this meant that "when bananas went down, the men suffered more" (Helen, 66, Giraudel)—who have established a community garden on 2.6 acres of land in Giraudel. I spent time there with them on several occasions during my stay in Dominica, both working in the garden and observing and talking with the flower growers as they performed various tasks around the site.

In all three cases, experiences and impressions were recorded via end-of-day field notes, and were also documented by means of photography.

In addition to these particular incidences, interviews with farmers often took place *in situ* on their farms, which provided the opportunity to engage in a bit of talking while walking, to have situated conversations about nature and engagements therewith. Such conversations allowed research participants to contextualize and enrich their talk about nature by making direct reference to, and demonstrating direct perception of, the natural world that is part of their day-to-day experience.

6.1.1 Seeing Nature

Given the primacy of sight as a means of sensory experience (Rodaway, 1994), I begin my discussion with consideration of visual perception. To a great extent becoming acquainted with nature in Dominica involved learning how to see and learning how Dominicans see nature in different ways.

At a general level, this involved learning to see the landscape as more than an undifferentiated mass of green. Conversations with farmers, gardeners and forestry officers taught me to distinguish between the different species of plants growing on both cultivated and wild plots of land. In some cases I had to learn to recognize a cultivated plot of land in the first place, in order to be able to see Dominican gardens (see Figure 9). Gardens in Dominica did not always conform with my expectation of what a garden looks like, based on my home-grown knowledge: they were grown on slopes that would have been deemed uncultivable in Barbados, they were not necessarily neatly

rowed out and weeded and organized with raised beds, and the main crops being grown were not familiar to me. It was not until I was given a guided tour of someone's garden and had people point out to me places where crops were being grown on steep slopes that I realized that gardens were all around me and I had not been seeing them. Had I not begun to learn to see differently, I would have been less aware of how much of Dominica's land is being put to agricultural use, and also less aware of the signs in the landscape of the decline of agriculture (i.e. abandoned fields of citrus, overgrown patches of bananas). It was not until I had acquired this new way of seeing that it occurred to me that a lot of what a tourist might see as wild, untouched, pristine, green nature, is actually currently or formerly cultivated land.



Figure 9: Garden of dasheen, Carib Territory (photo by author)

In 1979 Ringel and Wylie pondered the question of what Dominicans see when they look into the hills. Their metaphorical answer was that

Dominicans see God. A more literal response might consider that Dominicans see in the hills more than simply “green mountainsides” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:39). They see, variously and *inter alia*, plots of banana and coconut, provisions grounds, overgrown fields of passion fruit and pineapple, here a *zabiko* tree that will soon bear fruit, there a potentially valuable stand of mahogany, the slightly dull and dusty shadings of green that come with an extended spell of dry weather, the scar in the hillside that indicates a recent landslide. Dominican views of Dominican nature are not only “more calculating” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:39), they are also more discerning, and what people see when they look is intimately related to what they know of nature.

Dominican knowledges of nature also involve the ability to see and to discern difference at different levels of focus. One of my tasks in Kate’s nature sanctuary was to tag plants with their common and botanical names, with the assistance of a photographic catalogue she had prepared. The plants in question were generally familiar to me—ginger lilies, heliconias, begonias, anthuriums—but I quickly realized that my horticultural acumen was insufficient for the task of distinguishing, for instance, this particular pink ginger lily from that pink ginger lily from yet another, also pink, ginger lily. In order to discern the difference, I had to make looking an active practice. It was necessary to cultivate an awareness of the sorts of details and distinguishing features that might assist me in my endeavour—were the inflorescences rounded at the tip or blunt, how long were the flower bracts, were the petals tucked closely in on each other or did they curl back at the tip, what shape were the leaves, what were the markings like, what was the colour of their undersides, what was the colour of the stem (Figure 10)?

As I struggled with my plant labelling assignment, I realized that Kate would be able to discern one variety of ginger lily from another as easily as I could tell a ginger lily from a heliconia, an ability that reflects her greater knowledge of botany. Similar powers of discernment are exhibited by the shopper who can identify various types of bananas at the market based on the fruits’ size, shape and colour, by the forestry officers who can distinguish

between two related but different types of forest tree based on (to my eye, imperceptible) differences in the colour of their wood, and by the farmer who explains that a particular variety of mango tree can be differentiated from others by subtle (again, to my eye) variations in the size, shape and colour of its leaves.



Figure 10: Two ginger lilies—different varieties, or the same variety at different stages of maturity? (photo by author)

Other examples of skilled seeing abound. Driving along the island's west coast, a beekeeper looked out into the forested hill and remarked on the *kanpèch* trees coming into bloom and how they would affect the flavour of the honey. The Head of Dominica's Fisheries Department, standing on the bayfront in December, observed that the high waves were unseasonal and predicted that the new year would bring unusual weather (and indeed in subsequent months, Dominica was afflicted by an extraordinary drought). On a sunny day in town, someone would take a quick glance at the Roseau River and remark, based on its level, colour and force, on the heavy rainfall that must have occurred in the interior. Observations such as these, though made casually, are evidence of knowledge of the natural world, in some

cases a knowledge grounded in the observer's particular interests and field of practice. For the folk in question, this skilled seeing and knowledgeable observation is not extraordinary; it is mundane and taken for granted. Nevertheless, their ability to discern variety, diversity and meaning that is not evident to less proficient observers is an embodied expression of their knowledge of nature in Dominica.

6.1.2 Natural Movements

Another aspect of perceptual relations to nature in Dominica relates to body movement and haptic experience in which the entire body serves as

an apparatus by which the individual gets information about both the environment and his [*sic*] body. He feels an object relative to the body and the body relative to an object. It is a perceptual system by which animals and men [*sic*] are *literally* in touch with the environment (Gibson, 1983[1966]:97, emphasis in original).

In geographies of embodiment there has been some discussion of the relationship between the haptic and the tactile (Rodaway, 1994; Obrador-Pons, 2007, Paterson, 2009). Both Rodaway (1994) and Paterson (2009) draw on Gibson's description, presented above, of the haptic system. Rodaway chooses to define the haptic such that it includes the tactile; his definition includes

the tactile receptivity of the skin, the movement of the body parts and the locomotion of the whole body through the environment. To this extent, kinesthesia is included in the label 'haptic' (Rodaway, 1994:42).

Paterson (2009) on the other hand, considers the haptic system to include the sense of movement (kinaesthesia), the sense of bodily position (proprioception) and the sense of balance (the vestibular system), but apparently not the tactile sense of cutaneous contact.

In the following discussion of haptic experience my focus is on how places, spaces and their characteristics are apprehended through the body's senses

and sensations of movement, posture, balance, muscular tension and exertion, making my usage of haptic is more aligned to that espoused by Paterson. I address tactile experience separately and specifically elsewhere in this chapter.

An essential aspect of haptic knowledge of nature in Dominica emerges from the process of learning to walk in the island's terrain. An interviewee, when I told him that I was from Barbados, made an observation that is reminiscent of Ingold's (2004) discussion of how techniques of walking are conditioned by spatial, social and cultural context:

Oh, Barbados, that's a flat place. People over there can walk around fast, fast and upright, like they in the army [and he swung his arms briskly to add demonstrative force to his statement]. In a place like Dominica, we can't walk so fast, we have to take it easy (Trevor).

In several conversations, I was told of places in Dominica called Paix Bouche, given this appellation in reference to the steepness of the terrain: the incline is so great that rather than attempt to talk and walk at the same time, you should just keep your mouth shut and concentrate on making your way uphill.

Indeed I found, particularly in the early stages of my stay in Dominica, that the hills often thwarted any tendency I had to try to walk 'fast, fast' and that it was often best to keep silent and conserve my breath while walking up them, and to pay attention to placing my feet firmly and securely while walking down. I learned to walk the hills in Giraudel by watching the flower growers and seeing how, for example, they would go up on their toes slightly to make an uphill walk a little easier. Techniques like this were useful for walking on paved roads—in the forest, walking posed additional challenges and required an entirely new repertoire of skills.

"You have to learn how to walk," was the advice I received on my first field trip with staff from the Forestry Division. "People think they already know how to do it, but out here, you have to *learn* how to walk." A similar

sentiment has been expressed by Tim Edensor, who has written of how walking of various sorts involves the acquisition of relevant skill sets and bodily competencies: "It might be imagined that walking simply involves putting one foot in front of the other, yet some authorities maintain that it requires particular techniques" (Edensor, 2001:97). I was guided on how to keep my balance when stepping from one slippery rock to the next across a river, on how to make steps in the slopes by digging in with my heel or the side of my foot, and on the importance of paying attention to how and where I took each step. I learned how to make use of fronds and branches to haul myself along and up, and how to use my body in order to manoeuvre (breaking and pushing branches out of the way, shuffling sideways, sometimes crouching and resting a hand on the muddy ground to stabilize myself). I was taught that, rather than resisting gravity during a downhill clamber, I could use it, in short bursts, to assist my descent, and that I should try to maintain a steady rhythm throughout an ascent, rather than being tempted to accelerate through the more level portions of the climb. I learned as well to be continually alert to the qualities and properties of the environment, so that I would be able to deliberately deploy appropriate ambulatory strategies. This alertness to the variations provided by constantly changing context, and the ability to continually adjust in response to those changes, has been described as one of the identifying characteristics of practical knowledge (Agrawal, 2002).

In recent times several geographers and social scientists have directed their attention to practices of walking (Edensor, 2000, 2001; Wylie, 2002a, 2002b; Lorimer and Lund, 2003; Ingold, 2004; Ingold and Vergunst, 2008; Hall, 2009; Waitt et al., 2009; Middleton, 2010) as a means of relating to landscapes and places. Of these researchers, Edensor and Ingold have focused most sharply on walking as a haptic exercise, involving in and of itself various physical actions, bodily techniques and sensory experiences. Ingold proposes that

if perception is ... a function of movement, then what we perceive must, at least in part, depend on how we move. Locomotion, not cognition, must be the starting point for the study of perceptual activity. ...[W]alking is itself a form of circumambulatory knowing ... Indeed

it could be said that walking is a highly intelligent activity (Ingold, 2004:331-332).

Similarly, Edensor refers to walking as “practical knowledge” (2001:82) that “besides (re)producing distinctive forms of embodied practices ... also (re)produces and (re)interprets space” (2001:82). Making a way through the humid rainforest, up and down slopes that are steep, muddy, slippery, and full of obstacles like tree roots, fallen trunks or thick clumps of bamboo certainly brings one into a new awareness of the ruggedness of Dominica’s terrain, the dampness of its climate and the density of its vegetation. The forested hills that from a distance look regular and tranquil become something different entirely when one is walking in them.

Haptic sensation is also an important aspect of people’s familiarity with cultivated nature in Dominica. At the flower show site in Giraudel, during a day of group gardening and maintenance, one woman remarked to another about her body’s physical memory of earlier nature work—she had woken up that morning feeling soreness in her legs:

I was wondering why they were hurting me so much,
but then I realized I spent a long time yesterday
planting out [seedlings] and weeding; it was all the
bending down that did it.

On the same occasion, I was assigned the task of clearing weeds and vines from the front of the site. Removing the vines involves getting down on haunches or on knees, in among the roots, branches and leaves of the overgrown shrub or bush, looking, or sometimes feeling blindly, for the main stalk of the vine, taking a strong grasp of it (and the more I worked I began to learn the right way to grip the stalk in order to successfully uproot it), and bracing for a strong pull against the stubborn resistance of the vine itself and the soil in which it is firmly rooted. Similarly, pulling weeds involves assuming a certain physical posture, and handling the plants in a particular way in order to successfully remove them, roots intact, from the earth. Weeding, like walking, involves a degree of skill, and I found myself

absurdly pleased when the more experienced women on site praised my technique, remarking that I looked like a practised gardener.

Another aspect of this bodily relation with nature is the way in which it brings the body and the senses into a different sort of orientation to the natural world. Squatting or kneeling amongst the roots and lower branches of the shrubbery, one becomes more aware of the smell of the soil, its texture as you pull the roots free from its grip, the presence of ants, worms, millipedes, caterpillars, insects and other things that bite and sting and give rashes, small creatures and features that you might not otherwise notice; you realize that gardens are teeming with all sorts of life.

Marsha Quinlan (2003) found that as mechanized forms of agriculture and chemical weed control became more prevalent in Dominica, there was a corresponding reduction in awareness of the presence of medicinal herbs and plants, many of which are weedy and inconspicuous. Weeding by hand means that one is closer and more closely attentive to each plant that one encounters and therefore able to distinguish the presence of, for instance, chickweed or wormgrass (Figures 11 and 12) among other similarly unassuming, but less useful, plants.

The use of sprayable chemical herbicides, on the other hand, physically distances people from the plants they are controlling (Quinlan, 2003). It reduces their acquaintance with the diversity of nature and diminishes everyday awareness of the presence of beneficial plants—which, as Dominican herbalist Disciple Caesar pointed out in his text *The Healer is Here* (1997), are often found in easily overlooked locations like the cracks of sidewalks, the shady ruins of abandoned houses, and unattended fields. Thus the rise of chemical agriculture is implicated in the decline of traditional herbal medicine in Dominica (Quinlan, 2003). Quinlan's work provides evidence of how changes in the mundane ways in which people experience nature, changes that reduce their bodily contact with the natural world, can have social consequences on a larger scale. As I discuss in chapter 7, these types of changes are perceived by Dominicans as being among the

most notable aspects of how relationships to nature in Dominica have been, and are being, transformed.



Figure 11: Chickweed growing in a school garden, Pointe Michel (photo by author)



Figure 12: Wormgrass growing in a school garden, Pointe Michel (photo by author)

6.1.3 Other Senses of Nature

It has been said that the study of “representations of space and of the social imagination can no longer afford to neglect materials pertaining to auditory perception” (Corbin, 1999:xii), and so I address myself next to people’s perceptions of the sounds of nature in Dominica.

As with vision, auditory perceptual ability can serve as an indicator of knowledge of nature. One of the forest officers who participated in my research is a specialist in ornithology and Dominican birdlife. He impressed upon me how important the sense of hearing is to his relationship to nature, emphasizing that amateur ornithology is now referred to as birding, rather than bird-watching, in recognition of the fact that people can also spot birds with their ears, as well as with their eyes. A key aspect of his ornithological expertise and his familiarity with Dominica’s natural environment is his ability to hear and recognize birdsong, and to identify Dominica’s birds by their calls. This skill is not restricted to scientific experts—since 2009, the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division has held an annual “Whistle like a bird” competition⁸, in which participants ably demonstrate their familiarity with the sounds and songs of Dominican birdlife.

The acts of hearing and of listening to the sounds of nature were often described as a source of pleasure. For one interviewee, the first time he heard the call of the mountain whistler was a defining moment in his relationship with nature:

[I was on] my first hike, it was to the Boiling Lake, and I remember hearing a sound, I didn’t even know it was a bird at first, but I found out that it was the call of the mountain whistler, and I just fell in love with that sound, it just touched me and stayed with me (Wilson, 29, Bath Estate).

⁸ The 2010 and 2011 competitions are available for viewing at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Owo7Pl6aaRI> (accessed November 9, 2011) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbxxoWStwLg> (accessed November 9, 2011) respectively.

Another described the relaxation and satisfaction he derives from visiting the “nature island birds” in the aviary in the Botanic Gardens:

I go there and sit down and the whole thing of listening to [the parrots] makes it all worthwhile going there (Carlos, 38, Newtown).

I propose that a substantial part of Carlos’s enjoyment derives from his identification of the parrots as ‘nature island birds’. In listening to them he is experiencing, not just sounds of nature, but the sounds of *Dominican* nature; he is having a sensory experience that can be thought of as being unique to Dominica.

Several farmers I spoke to said that one of their great pleasures in nature is listening to birdsong as they work in their gardens, especially in the early morning. One mentioned that the only thing that could make his farm better would be to have a stream running through it; I thought that this was for practical reasons, that he wanted the water for irrigation, but he corrected me: it was because he would love to be able to hear, along with the morning chatter of the birds, the sound of a river flowing outside his window.⁹

The absence of sound—or more precisely, the absence of undesirable, unnatural sounds—was mentioned by several research participants as a feature of their special personal experiences of nature. For example:

I just love the walking in the sounds and the quiet of the forests, just walking and not having manmade sounds (Rosa, 46, Roseau).

⁹ This desire for a water feature appears to have some cross-cultural cachet (Strang, 2005; Tilley, 2006). For example, in a survey of English and Swedish gardeners, Tilley found that

The one desirable feature most frequently mentioned by both English and Swedish gardeners that might turn their existing garden into a dream garden was the presence of water—a large pond or, preferably, running water, a small stream with a waterfall. Importantly, it was the relaxing sound of water as much as its visual appearance that was the most significant factor. (Tilley, 2006:325)

Farmers also mentioned “the quiet, the quiet atmosphere” (Bertha, 60s, Giraudel) as something that they greatly enjoyed about their work. This peace and quiet was sometimes positioned as a contrast to the hustle and noise of life and work in the town. The rural “space of quietness” (Keith, 47, Concord) was described as therapeutic for the body, mind and spirit. These descriptions of auditory experience bear relation to notions of nature as beautiful and serene, separate from and unspoiled by human activity and intervention (Soper, 1995; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998).

In *Sensuous Geographies*, Rodaway (1994) discussed two possible interpretations of the term ‘soundscape’. The term is generally used to describe “a geographical space of particular sonic characteristics” (Rodaway, 1994:86) but one might also think of soundscapes as “auditory experiences ... less an object for contemplation and more a process of engagement with the environment” (Rodaway, 1994:87). My presentation here of some of the ways in which Dominicans have auditory relationships with nature, of the “scientific and aesthetic ways of listening [and of the] listener’s relationship to their environment” (Thompson, 2004:1), is more in the spirit of this latter definition, in which

the auditory landscape, the elaboration of collective and territorial identities, the emotion aroused by the environment and the modes of construction of the individual personality all interact (Corbin, 1999:xii).

I further propose that the aforementioned accounts and descriptions can also be thought of as descriptions of a soundscape in a third sense, in that they describe, not a “geographical space of particular sonic characteristics” (Rodaway, 1994:86), but what people perceive to be the sonic characteristics of a particular (type of) geographical space, that of nature in Dominica. Overall, people’s accounts of auditory experiences of nature in Dominica are more than simple descriptions of the types of sounds to be heard on the island. They are indicative of the qualities that, for them, characterize nature; indicative, too, of how and why they value nature, of what nature means to them and how it makes them feel.

The sense of taste has been somewhat neglected in the arena of geographical study. Rodaway's (1994) *Sensuous Geographies*, for example, treats the sense of taste less comprehensively than the other senses, including it rather cursorily in a chapter that focusses mainly on the sense of smell. Perhaps this lack of attention is because taste, even more than smell, is thought of as being highly subjective (Press and Minta, 2000) and "does not seem of great value in structuring space" (Porteous, 1985, cited in Rodaway, 1994:68). Nevertheless, the sense of taste is crucial to sensory experience of nature in Dominica, because Dominicans frequently identify food as an essential aspect of the country's nature and its naturalness. It has been said that

Taste and smell are crucial to the construction of identities because food—the stuff of all sensory experience—is so central to our daily lives. And food in turn is laden with cultural significance because it is the object of constant transformation by social and natural processes (Walmsley, 2005:44).

Responses from interviewees show clearly that growing and eating fresh local foods is, for them, an integral part of Dominica's identity as a nature island, and of Dominica's national culture. The fine flavour of Dominica's produce, particularly its fruit, is proudly attributed to the quality of its soil and water and its favourable climate—an example of how, in Dominica, as elsewhere, "quality is coming to be seen as inherent in more 'local' and more 'natural' foods" (Murdoch et al., 2000; see also Goodman, 2003; Winter, 2003; Feagan, 2007). The sense of taste is also important to people's pragmatic interactions with nature: farmers spoke of preserving seeds from their best tasting fruit as a method of selective breeding. One indicated pawpaw and breadfruit trees that had grown in inconvenient positions close to his house, but confessed that he could not bring himself to cut them because they produced such flavourful fruit. On my first introductory tour of the Giraudel community garden, I was offered several fruit to sample; my host explained that the flower growers wanted to preserve some of the fruit trees on the site, and that they would decide which ones would be kept and which would not based on the taste of the fruit from various trees. Taste is an important feature of both ideas and practices of nature in Dominica.

Although the sense of smell is thought of as a relatively passive way of experiencing the world around us (Tuan, 1975; Rodaway, 1994; Press and Minta, 2000), there is evidence that people do “rely on olfaction to understand, mediate and shape their physical environment” (Press and Minta, 2000:179). Dominicans’ awareness of aroma as a property of the natural world is perhaps most clearly evidenced by the way it is brought to the fore in tourism practice, where, as mentioned in chapter 5, scents are highlighted as attractive qualities of the nature island. Two farmers who offer tours of their gardens specifically mentioned visitors’ enjoyment of olfactory experiences; as one of them said

They like to see the cocoa, the coffee, and they like smelling, I find too. As you saw, they like to smell everything (Bertha).

Smell is also pointed out by tour guides as a distinguishing natural features of certain places in Dominica. In geothermal hotspots such as the Valley of Desolation and the village of Wotten Waven, the smell of sulphur pervades the air, providing the most striking examples of Dominica’s natural ‘smellscapes’ (Porteous, 1985).

In other, non-touristic, references to the scents of nature, one interviewee spoke of how, having noticed the strong fragrance of the needles of a conifer tree in her garden, she was testing their efficacy as a natural insect repellent and air freshener for her home. In another example, an organic farmer invited me to inhale the goodness of the earthy, zesty scent of compost made with grass clippings and fruit scraps from his farm, compost that in his opinion fertilizes the soil better than any artificial additive. Other proponents of organic agriculture declared that in their experience conventionally grown produce can be tainted by the strong smell of the chemicals used to treat them. In these cases, olfactory experience contributes to the distinction between the natural/organic and artificial/chemical; certain types of fragrances are perceived to be associated with the former, with naturalness, wholesomeness and goodness.

Much has been written about the evocative nostalgic power of scents and smells (see, for example, Rodaway, 1994; Urry, 1999; Low, 2005; Waskul et al., 2009). This was vividly demonstrated by how one respondent, who was born in the United Kingdom of Dominican parents and who repatriated to the island as an adult, described her indirect childhood encounters with nature in Dominica, encounters in which olfactory experience played an important role:

I have the memory of the smells of mango and spices and bay leaf coming from my mother's suitcase when she comes back from Dominica, and the emotional hit of that. Alive, vibrant, assaulting your nostrils. ...For a while I wasn't coming to Dominica and only getting third hand experiences of the island and that was one of them (Barbara, 44, Copthall).

As we see from the examples above, the sense of smell is not only part of people's experiences of nature in Dominica, but it also plays a significant role in structuring their ideas of nature and naturalness more generally.

The sense of touch was not often explicitly referred to, although much of the activity of cultivating nature involves touching and literally getting to grips with the natural world. We are in continual contact with the world around us, but such contact does not always register as a tactile experience (Rodaway, 1994). Pulling up weeds, picking a fruit from a tree, scooping up water from a river: these all involve physical contact with the world of nature, but the act of touching is passive and implicit, likely to be overshadowed by the haptic experience of pulling, reaching or scooping.

Tactile contact with nature was often referred to indirectly, in descriptions of being touched by nature, rather than of touching nature. In such cases, the experiences often involved contact with water: being in the fresh cool flow of a river or the currents of the ocean, soaking in the warmth of a hot spring or natural sulphur spa, feeling the force of a waterfall beating down on tense shoulders. Rodaway has suggested that the distinction between "feeling in general and touching (or feeling) in the specific senses" (1994:47) is a distinction between passive and active, akin to the distinction between

seeking and looking, or hearing and listening. He uses a ‘haptic matrix’ (Figure 13) to clarify the distinction.

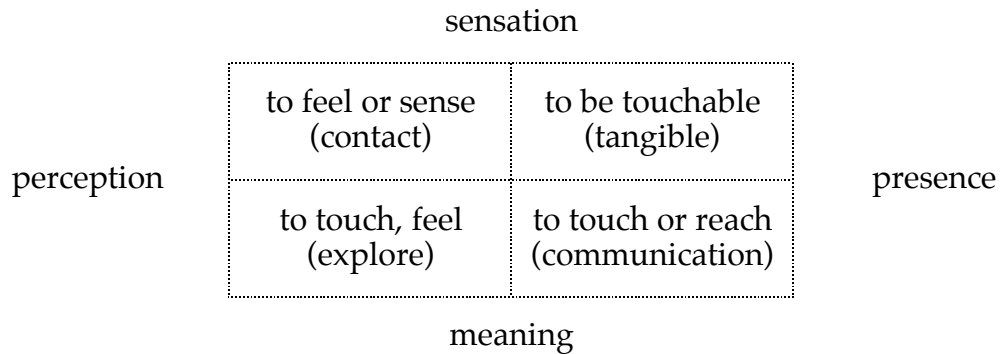


Figure 13: The haptic matrix (Rodaway, 1994:47)

The tactile experiences of water that respondents described were not just simple instances of coming into contact with nature—“feeling in general” (Rodaway, 1994:47)—but of “present[ing] oneself as touchable or in reach” (Rodaway, 1994:47), making oneself available to be touched by nature. In fact, one respondent describes his growing reluctance to bathe in the Roseau River, because of what he sees as increasing water pollution, in these very terms:

For me it’s a very unsettling experience that the river that I knew and I trusted and I bathed and I drank from, that today I have to be cautious in *allowing it to touch me* (Wayne, 55, Roseau; emphasis added).

Tactile experiences of this sort are perhaps some of the clearest examples of how sensuous engagement with nature can produce awareness not only of the natural world with which we are engaging, but also of our own embodiment as part of our sense of self and relationship with nature, of how “nature here [in Dominica] and being in nature brings an awareness of how ... it feels to be in your body” (Barbara).

In cases where active touch was specifically referred to by respondents, it was with reference to coming in contact with the soil. One interviewee

shared his enjoying of “go[ing] hiking and walk[ing] barefoot so I can feel the mud and earth between my toes” (Wilson). While doing some planting in the Giraudel-Eggleston community garden, one woman spoke of enjoying the feeling of the moist dirt, of there being nothing better than having one’s hand in the earth. In an interview, a respondent told of his father taking his hands and making him touch the earth in their backyard:

My father would tell me to come and put my hands in the ground and tell me this is God’s soil, it is not dirty, it belongs to God, God’s soil is not dirty (Mr. Sutton, 61, Bellevue Chopin).

Of the latter two examples, one of these touches is passive/implicit rather than active and intentional—the second case involves the act of touching as an end in itself, whereas in the first tactile sensation is a side-effect, so to speak, of another primary, purposeful activity. But in both cases, the touches are infused with meaning, and become symbolic of a relationship with nature, that of the cultivator who works productively with the soil, with the material of the earth itself.

We have seen, through various examples of sensory perception, how physical interactions with the natural world can be embodiments of people’s concepts of nature, thus connecting ideas and practice. It is important not to disregard the fact that this connection does not occur independent of context; indeed, it is highly context dependent. This is illustrated by the example of a woman who spoke deplorably to me of how when she was a child she and her mother, who worked on a grapefruit estate, would, as a matter of course, have to slog uphill to the main road with the grapefruit on their heads. She told me this while walking up the same hill to the same road, carrying a load of grapefruit on her head; yet it was clear that, although the physical practice was the same, its meaning and the relationship to nature that it embodied were, in her understanding, very different. While her mother had been a poorly paid estate labourer, she was carrying grapefruit she had grown herself, of her own accord, on her own land, for her own benefit and personal profit (recall the distinctions, described in Chapter 4, between plantation and plot). Her embodied practice was an expression of independence, self-

determination and her commitment to living off the land, in a way that the earlier practice, taking place in a different social and economic context, had not been. Her lived nature was distinctly different from her mother's, even though many aspects of the living appeared to be the same.

6.2 Living with Nature

In the remainder of this chapter I continue to explore the theme of lived experience as a medium for generating, interpreting and expressing ideas of nature. To do so, I look at how people talk about nature, about the role it plays in their lives and what it is and means to them. All of the research participants referred to in the following discussion live in the same district and all of them practise peasant farming. Despite these commonalities, they each encounter, perceive and relate to nature quite differently—they have each produced their own particular lived nature.

6.2.1 *Mr. and Mrs. Joseph*

I begin with the Josephs, a married couple in their sixties, both of whom have lived all their lives in an upland village in the south-east of Dominica. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph, who were interviewed separately, reported that they had been farming since about 1964, at which time Mr. Joseph would have been in his early 20s and Mrs. Joseph in her late teens. Both had parents who were farmers, on their own accounts as well as on the nearby estates—Mrs. Joseph remembers when “all the land around” used to be estates. She and her husband both recall spending time in home gardens and on the estate with their parents. Mr. Joseph followed his parents into estate agriculture, working as a manager on a citrus estate, as well as farming for himself. Mrs. Joseph also worked on the estate until she got married. After giving up her estate job, she kept her own vegetable garden at home, along with, for a time, another small garden on a portion of estate land. She recalls taking her young children with her to her garden on the estate after school and during the holidays. The produce from the Josephs' gardens (they grew vegetables,

provisions and, at one time, flowers) were both used for their own domestic supply and sold in the Roseau market. The living earned from agriculture enabled the Josephs to educate their children, none of whom have taken up agriculture as a career.

Despite having, to a great extent, a common and shared experience of nature, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph do not speak of this experience in the same terms. Mrs. Joseph, in speaking about how she has met nature over the course of her life, placed more emphasis than her husband on the way farming has allowed her to support herself and her family. Her answers to interview questions emphasized that “it is from [nature] we living” and that “up to now I living on it”. It is through her relationship with nature and her lifelong practice of that relationship that she has been able to feed her family and others, to pay her bills, build her home and educate her children. Nature is important to her because it allows her to do something for herself; working with nature as a farmer earns her a living and provides her with a sense of independence.

Mr. Joseph also mentions earning a living from agriculture, but his focus in speaking of farming as a way of relating to nature is on the idea that it is what people were created for and what nature itself was created for:

From the beginning of time, people were put on the earth [by God] to work the land, and the land was put around you to be worked. Not just to build houses on ... but to work on the land, that is what it is for.

When he quotes Dominica’s national motto *Après Bondie c’est la Ter*, there is the sense that he understands it to be prescriptive as well as descriptive. It is worth mentioning that Mr Joseph has for 30 years been pastor at a Baptist church in the village; his relationship to nature and the natural world is connected to this aspect of his daily life, as well as to his role as a peasant agriculturalist.

Mrs. Joseph explained her understanding of nature in terms of practice. She told me, “Nature is health, good food, and being able to work the land and feed yourself. That is my nature and I love doing it.” She understands nature

by means of what she is able to do in and with it, and with reference to what it does for her. For Mr. Joseph, the relationship between practices and concepts seems most evident in the reverse direction; his practices in relation to the natural world are imbued with meaning via his concept of nature and of a divinely ordained natural order. Mrs. Joseph expresses her thoughts about nature and relationships with nature primarily in terms of a final cause, in terms of the purpose that nature serves and the ways in which it is instrumentally useful. Mr. Joseph, on the other hand, expresses his ideas about relationship to nature in the language of formal causes, with reference to an ideal that establishes the essential characteristics of a proper and appropriate relationship between nature and humankind.

While Mr. and Mrs. Joseph have much in common as regards their practical, observable relationship to nature, they expressed their ideas about those relationships and about nature in quite different terms, involving quite different emphases. This, of course, does not mean that there is no value in attending to the commonalities in their experiences and ideas and to how these are part of a broader cultural context. After all, it is likely that, if asked, Mrs. Joseph would agree that God's word provides instruction on how humankind should relate to nature. Similarly, Mr. Joseph would probably acknowledge that nature has been a key economic asset for himself and his family. Still, there is much to be learned from paying attention to and examining differences and particular cases. This approach expands knowledge of the variety and nuance in how people think about nature and ascribe meaning to it; it develops understanding of how nature is lived and dwelt.

6.2.2 *Marcus and Ann Pierre*

The second case, from the same village, is that of the Pierres, Marcus and Ann. Unlike the Josephs, the Pierres chose to be interviewed together, and as a result their answers were overlapping and mutually reinforcing. Both Marcus and Ann have lived in the district since childhood, having been raised on farms by, in their words "parents from the old time" (Ann) so they

“were already stuck to nature in a way, already had that love for nature” (Ann). At present they are proprietors of a banana farm, which was a demonstration farm in an internationally-funded organic banana project. More recently, they have put their long-held interest in natural healing and herbal medicine into practice by cultivating a herb garden, with a focus on local plants and their therapeutic uses. As participants in a local community tourism initiative, they occasionally offer tours of this garden, both to other Dominicans and to visitors from overseas.

Although the Pierres credit their upbringings with contributing to their relationships with nature and the natural world, they also place considerable emphasis on these relationships as something that they consciously chose and have actively fostered and cultivated. They made it clear early in the interview that they choose to live as they do, and mentioned later that while their respective siblings have gone into other fields, they made their decision to live on the farm and to pursue a natural lifestyle. While their observable relationship with nature might have much in common with that of their parents, it is not simply a case of following in the footsteps of previous generations. Rather they actively began, when they were in their 20s, to seek out nature and to pursue a relationship with nature, and two decades later they continue, as Ann puts it, to “do our own thing, express our own personalities, make our own decisions and follow our hearts.”

A formative experience in this regard was a year of voluntary “exile” in the hills, during which time they relied on nature to supply all their needs, with “nothing from the shop, nothing from the supermarket” (Marcus). Marcus tells that they

grew up hearing [about] going in the bush, like it’s the jungle with all the wild animals, something to be afraid of, so it was like a big mystery when we got in there.

Having embarked on the undertaking with little idea of what to expect, they at first had “a lot of negative thoughts” (Marcus), but eventually their time in the bush taught them lessons about nature’s sufficiency, its healing powers

and, through interactions with and observations of animals, “about human nature, about love and community” (Ann). All in all, it gave them “good insight about how to go” (Marcus) when they came down from the hills to pursue a natural way of life back in the village.

In their interview the Pierres identified this ‘exile’ as one of several factors that have shaped and defined their relationships with nature. Other influences included their upbringing on the land by parents who were farmers—“when you grow up with the land, you do things naturally, just via your intuition and you learn what they are good for” (Ann)—and their exploration of religious teachings:

We turned to the Bible at a certain age and found it had a lot of reality and a lot of guidance about how to live with nature and how nature is so important and that’s what God has really planned for man, he put them in a garden, so all these things inspired us (Marcus).

They learned a great deal from their parents and other elders, who the Pierres feel had a greater consciousness of nature from living in it—although it was acknowledged that “some of them maybe were looking for a way out of it”(Marcus). They have supplemented this with knowledge gained through their own experimentation, enquiry and observation, their own seeking after nature. Marcus and Ann have drawn all these elements together to formulate a notion of nature as not just those aspects of the material world that are not man-made, but also as a realm of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. They speak of living in the forest as a “natural, spiritual experience” (Marcus), one that heightened their awareness of the need for human beings to have a connection with nature. They tell of “learning from nature that every person is created from energy and that you have to fill up this energy and recharge and that you get this recharge from nature” (Ann). In their view, nature’s energy does not just affect human beings. It acts upon all aspects of the world, affecting plants and animals: lunar energy, for instance, has impacts on crop yields, fertility, healing, and

even things as mundane as hair growth.¹⁰ The Pierres acknowledge that the lifestyle they have chosen is not easy and is not for everyone: “you have to have the love for it, to be doing something you are naturally inclined for, ... but it takes lot of hard work and endurance” (Marcus). However, they believe that “if you’re interested and you’re walking the walk and the journey, ... that those spirits will be with you to guide you” (Ann).

The Pierres provide an example (one of several that I encountered in Dominica) of an orientation to nature that has not simply arisen, but has been consciously chosen and cultivated. Their case illustrates how perceptions of and orientations to nature are not just about apprehending the world external to oneself, but also about creatively exploring, projecting oneself onto, and embedding oneself in that world. The distinction here shows some parallels to that described earlier in this chapter, between passive and active sensuous experiences of nature. The way in which Marcus and Ann relate to nature is an active and intentional expression of their values, personalities and identities. Their relationship with nature is not just something they have, it is something they make.

6.2.3 *Beatrice Pierre*

The third case I shall present from the village is that of Beatrice Pierre. Although her family is not originally from the area in question, she has lived there for most of her life (having spent time in other parts of Dominica, as well as in England, the United States Virgin Islands, and St. Vincent) and now, at age 58, considers it home. As with the Josephs and the Pierres, agriculture features heavily in her childhood and upbringing. In her words, “farming was part of the family culture”. Her father was an estate manager, and it was this work that brought him and his family to the village where she now lives. Her mother was a shopkeeper who also kept a garden in order to feed her twelve children. Beatrice fondly recalls following her mother to the

¹⁰ Here we get a notion, as per Williams (1976) of nature as an inherent directive force, or a causal power (Soper, 1995), but it is not necessarily the sort of force, power or energy with which the natural sciences are concerned.

garden: “we would go to the garden with our forks and gather food and cook it right there in the garden and eat it and then go home”. Being in the garden was “a pleasurable thing” and it was these childhood experiences that fostered Beatrice’s love for farming. She describes herself as a “very inquisitive person” and spending time in the garden allowed her to indulge her desire to explore and investigate the world around her.

This quality of curiosity strongly characterizes Beatrice’s orientation towards nature and the natural world. During our interview, she spoke repeatedly of learning, finding out, being interested in, knowing, experimenting and observing. “It’s a constant observation thing for me in life,” she explained, and later emphasized that

as a farmer, or even not as a farmer, but as someone close to nature who loves nature, it’s important and valuable to be observant and to pay close attention to the things around you.

In addition to learning by her own observation and experimentation, Beatrice also amasses knowledge by reading widely and by asking other people, particularly older people, questions about what things are and what they are useful for. Learning new things about nature brings her considerable enjoyment, even excitement.

Beatrice expressed a great enthusiasm for the diversity of nature. She used to cultivate a garden with a wide assortment of herbs and medicinal plants, collected from all around the island. Her mission is to abate what she believes to be a decrease in the variety of medicinal plants, vegetable varieties and fruit trees being grown in Dominica, and the corresponding decline in lay knowledge about nature’s diversity and utility. She is motivated in part by an interest in the economic value of the plants in question, but also by her pleasure in the variety of nature for its own sake. There is the added benefit, as she points out, that the things and creatures of nature can be useful in indirect and sometimes overlooked ways. Trees, for example, provide not only fruit and timber, but also a home for birds, and the birds were a major line of defence when Dominica was threatened by an

invasive plague of locusts some years earlier. Birds are also a good early warning system in the event of bad weather, and animals, by their behaviour, can signal the advent of an earthquake.

Beatrice has a firm belief in what she pithily refers to as “planting for your pocket”, i.e. in agriculture as a means of earning an independent livelihood. She is also a believer in the healing powers of nature; a bout of severe illness some 20 years previously sparked her interest in herbal medicine. She has more recently become an advocate of organic farming, and thinks that nature and “being natural” are enhancing to both physical and mental health. She is of the opinion that “people need to stick to the word nature and be truly natural and we will go a long way.” It is her belief that this principle applies not just on the personal, individual level, but also on a grander scale: a return to nature and the natural would be beneficial to Dominica as a country.

With Beatrice, as with Marcus and Ann, it is clear that her relationship with nature is fundamentally expressive of her personality and character, of her own distinctive way of being in the world. I gathered that this relationship with nature largely consists of her active and dynamic engagement with the natural world. Beatrice spoke about nature almost exclusively in terms of the tangible physical world and its materials and forces, and her engagements with nature, as she describes them, are very concrete and practical. Although she lives in the same village as the Josephs and the Pierres, there is a sense that not only is her relationship with nature different from theirs, but that the nature she relates to is also, conceptually, quite different.

Having presented these three vignettes, I now wish to highlight three things about them.

The first is the way in which each case reveals orientations to nature that are more lively, complex and creative than might be inferred from observations of daily practice or from responses to the questions “what is nature?” or “what is your perception of nature?” The narratives produced by Beatrice, the Pierres and the Josephs serve to provide a richer understanding of their

relationships with nature, of the practical, imaginative and affective elements that are involved in, and that serve to invigorate, those relationships. People's practices and experiences are neither simply an influence on nor an effect of their relationships to nature, they are an integral part of the ongoing becoming of those relationships (Crouch, 2003a, 2003b). Thus the brief accounts above show us how people make their relationships to nature, and also what they make of them; they show how nature "becomes understood as something through which and with which lives are lived and identity ... made" (Crouch, 2000:64).

Second, I wish to point out that while there are common elements and similarities—memories of parentally-guided childhood nature encounters, livelihoods based on farming, nature and the natural order as divine creation—between these three accounts of people's nature relations, it would be erroneous and somewhat facile to aggregate the ideas and experiences described above into something called 'the Dominican perception of nature' or 'the Dominican attitude to nature'. Considerable meaning and substance—Beatrice's inquisitiveness and quest for greater knowledge of the natural world, the Pierre's spirituality, Mrs. Joseph's emphasis on nature as the source of her living and her independence—would be lost in such an agglomeration. It is possible too that in overarching generalization, other sources of plurality other than the strictly individual may be overlooked: How is Mrs. Joseph's relationship to nature shaped by her identity as a woman and a homemaker? How is Mr. Joseph's affected by his devout Christianity? How were the Pierres' attitudes to nature shaped by their coming to young adulthood at a particular time in Dominica's history? Or by the fact that their parents were estate owners, rather than paid labourers? How has Beatrice's time spent abroad influenced her thinking about nature in her homeland? Understanding of the world we study can be deepened as much by beginning with an interest in and attention to particularities and the details of difference, as it can by an attempt to uncover generalities.

I wish further to repudiate any idea that Dominicans' perceptions of and relationships to nature are naïve, that they are inevitable outgrowths of a

Dominican way of life, or of a peasant perspective, or that they simply arise from or are provoked by the characteristics of the island itself. Bunk   (1978), Ranger (2000) and Soper (2003) are among those who have written pointed criticisms of the ways in which peasants' and farmers' responses to land, landscape and nature are depicted as unaffected, spontaneous, non-ideological, inarticulate, unaware and purely pragmatic, with workers on the land being portrayed as having no idea of what "kind of place he likes or why he thinks nature is good" (Shepard, 1973, cited in Bunk  , 1978:554; see also Shepard, 2002[1967]). The cases described here throw into sharp relief the danger of treating Dominicans' perceptions of and relations to nature as rudimentary, involuntary, unselfconscious or unexamined. They undermine the idea that Dominicans' perceptions of nature are determined by their economic reliance on the natural world, or their taken-for-granted proximity to nature's abundance (Ringel and Wylie, 1979). It is incorrect to think that Dominicans have nothing but a natural attitude towards nature.

6.3 Conclusion

Overall in this chapter I have sought to draw out and focus attention on how people encounter and engage with nature in Dominica, how their relationships to nature involve grasping the world both sensuously and mentally, and how people's experiences of nature produce, enliven and express their knowledge about, ideas of and feelings for nature. Embodied interaction, lived experience and affect are all important elements of people's relationships to and practical ontologies of nature. The accounts presented herein highlight what Crouch (2001, 2003), calls 'the feeling of doing', i.e. the simultaneous and co-productive processes of sensing and making sense, experiencing and knowing, through embodied, expressive and subjective involvement with the world. They are about how people's relationships to nature in Dominica are felt, done, and lived.

7 Concepts of Nature

The discussion in the previous two chapters has focused primarily on ways in which people experience and live with the natural world in Dominica. In this chapter, my emphasis is on how people conceptualize and think about nature. I begin by discussing people's responses to the question, "What is nature?" Prime among these was the notion of nature as God's handiwork, an idea that has been identified as a recurring feature of Caribbean concepts of nature (Ringel and Wylie, 1979; Jaffe, 2006). Another common way of responding to the question "what is nature?" was to describe nature in terms of actions and practices—both the actions of nature itself and the practices of human beings in nature. Responses of this kind can be seen as indicative of the value Dominicans place on practical knowledge of nature, as discussed later in the chapter.

I go on to further exploration by considering nature via four collateral concepts (Earle et al., 1996, cited in Castree, 2005). Nature's collateral concepts, as Castree explains, are concepts that "involve some or all of the meanings and referents of the idea of nature" such that they are "mutually implicated [with] and depend upon [the concept of nature] at some level for their meaning to be understood" (Castree, 2005:41). Castree has written that "nature is a ghostly trace in several ... collateral concepts [such that] we can expand the range of our analysis [of ideas of nature] beyond those instances where nature is the stated object of discussion" (2005:41). A corollary of the notion of collateral concepts is that nature *bears* the ghostly traces of several other concepts, such that, even when nature is the stated object of discussion, there may be a host of other ideas at work under the surface. As such, the use of collateral concepts expands and enriches our understanding of what nature means in Dominica and to Dominicans. It helps to make explicit how their perceptions and ideas of nature both involve and extend beyond their perceptions of the natural world and their definitions of the word 'nature'. The collateral concepts I use are (1) the environment, (2) changing times, (3) development and (4) the natural.

The first of these was chosen in recognition of the rise of environmentalist and ecological discourse that increasingly equates 'nature' with 'the environment' (Berleant, 1992; Ingold, 1992; Soper, 1995; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). It allowed examination of the extent to which ideas about the environment and environmentalism have penetrated Dominicans' concepts of nature.

The choice of the second collateral concept, changing times, was influenced by research that pointed out the ways in which nature and the natural come to be associated with past times, heritage and tradition (Soper, 1995; O'Rourke, 1999). Examining how Dominicans perceive past relationships to nature provides insight into how they think of and value nature and relations thereto in the present. People's answers to questions related to this collateral concept also shed light on how Dominicans think about the distinctions, alluded to in chapter 5, between scientific knowledge and traditional, local knowledge about nature and the natural world.

In the case of Dominica, development was considered to be an important collateral concept of nature because the island's nature has repeatedly been implicated as a cause of or prime contributor to its underdevelopment (Wood, 1922; Waugh, 1958; Honychurch, 1995). Respondents' discussions of this concept were particularly revelatory of their thoughts and ideas about nature as one of Dominica's distinguishing features and qualities.

The final collateral concept, that of the natural, arose for consideration as a result of the way interviewees explained their ideas about naturalness and what it means to be natural. Their responses in this regard drew on notions of authenticity and essential character, notions that were not explicitly expressed in other aspects of their talk about nature, but that seem to play an important role in their understanding of relationships to Dominica's nature.

7.1 “Nature is what God made, end of story”

The most common element of the responses I received to the question “what is nature?” was the idea that nature is those features and characteristics of the world that have been created by God. In one instance a respondent who strongly averred that he was not of a religious bent nevertheless fell back on explaining nature in religious terms:

For me, nature is, if I was a believer, this is what I would say: nature is what God created. The land, the sea; so for us in Dominica, it's the rivers, our mountains, our waterfalls, lakes, our forests, the trees (Ellis, 49, Eggleston).

Respondents provided different elaborations on this central concept, developing the theme of divine creation in several different ways.

One of these involved the notion of nature as not just God-made, but God-given or God-provided. The idea here is not only that nature was created by God, but that it was created by God for the benefit and advantage of humankind; as one respondent put it, “to be subservient to man [*sic*] ... as a means of life” (Khadija, 24, Layout). Inherent in the concept of nature as God’s gift to humanity is the idea that humanity is separate from nature and has a privileged place relative to the other constituent elements of God’s creation. However, nature’s subservience to humankind does not seem to be understood by Dominicans as granting licence for careless domination. Respondents expressed the idea that humanity should try to use the gifts of nature wisely and responsibly.

Some respondents explained the notion of nature as God-given by making specific reference to the Biblical creation story. Mr. Joseph, for example, said that “the first people were placed in a garden ... people were put on earth to work the land and the land was put around to be worked”. Marcus Pierre was also among those who made this reference, with his statement that “based on scripture, God created a garden for us and that’s where man [*sic*] is supposed to be”. Statements of this sort suggest that agriculture is the

original and ideal relationship between nature and humankind, highlighting the idea that nature was not just created by God, but was created by God as “a garden for us”.

In some cases the idea of nature as God’s gift was developed to make reference to nature in Dominica specifically. This positions Dominica’s natural features—its mountains, forests, rivers and wildlife—as a particular gift from God. There were two different currents of thought among respondents who discussed nature in this way. The first was that if nature in general was a gift from God, then Dominica was particularly blessed in that it had more nature than other places. The other was that different places were created with different characteristics and assets, with nature being Dominica’s distinguishing feature, according to God’s design.

Another way of elaborating on the idea of nature as made by God was to contrast it with things that have been made by human beings. So nature is that are “not man-made [*sic*] [but] God-given” (Khadija). (Note, however, that the idea of nature as “not man-made” was not always explicitly linked to the idea of nature as divinely created or provided.) This concept of nature was extended beyond the notion that nature is those things that *have not* been made by human beings, to the idea that nature is those things that *cannot* be made by human beings. For example, one respondent said that:

To me nature is everything I cannot create. It is the embodiment of natural formation. So the mountains, the rivers, the valleys, crafted by forces that are not man-made. It is the biodiversity that has been bestowed upon this beautiful gem island. [Note here the idea of nature as Dominica’s particular boon] ...We are unable to create that, in that sense... It’s literally the things that we have no control over... To me that’s what nature is (Andrew Magloire, Dominica Fisheries Department).

In this way of thinking, nature consists of things that are outside the realm of human capability to produce, create or control. A respondent, expressing his view that nature is “the things we can’t make” went further to explain that it

is “everything we didn’t make, everything we meet there” (Peter, 50, Mahaut).

This response needs some clarification. In Dominica I learned the expression “to meet nature” and I learned instead of asking in my interviews, “How do you encounter nature in your daily life?” to ask, “How do you meet nature?” It seemed to me at first just a matter of adopting local parlance in order to facilitate more effective communication, but I came to realize that the use of ‘meet’ is significant because it carries with it meanings that ‘encounter’ does not similarly convey.

One distinction, present in Standard English, is that ‘encounter’ tends to imply happening upon something or someone by chance or unexpectedly; ‘meet’ shares this meaning, but can also refer to something done intentionally. Furthermore, in Standard English there may be a connotation of confrontation with ‘encounter’ that is not evident with the word ‘meet’.

In Caribbean English usage, there are additional subtleties associated with ‘meet’. *The Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* explains that ‘meet’ means not just to come upon a situation, thing or person, but also to come upon them in a certain state or condition; not just to encounter, but to experience, or to come to an awareness of a particular situation. So in Dominica to ask someone “How do you meet nature?” may be understood as asking about the circumstances and situation (both locationally and otherwise) in which the encounter takes place, and/or about the quality of the encounter itself, and/or the condition and characteristics of nature when the respondent encounters it, and/or even about the respondent’s own condition and characteristics when they encounter nature. *The Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* provides the example of coming home to “[meet] a lot of neighbours in the house”. In this particular instance, ‘meet’ may mean that you came into the presence of these people, or that you made their acquaintance for the first time, but in a sense it is not referring to the encounter at all but to the *condition* of there being a lot of neighbours in the house. Another example provided in the Dictionary is, “I born and meet the

track there.” The emphasis is not on the action of coming upon the track, but on the track’s condition of being there; it is a way of saying, “The track was there before I was born,” or of expressing the sentiment that, “As far as I am concerned, the track has always been there.”

I have made this linguistic point in order to provide a clear understanding of the expression, used by several respondents, that nature is “what we meet there”. There is a sense in which this expresses the idea that nature was the condition of a particular place, or of the world generally, before human intervention. In this sense nature refers to the characteristics of a particular place at the moment of encounter; so, for instance, European explorers met a lot of nature—forests, rivers, wildlife—in Dominica. But it is saying something more than this; as with the dictionary example given above with the track, to say that nature is what we met there is to say something that is not so much about the human encounter with nature and the effects of this encounter, but instead about nature’s fundamental condition of *being there*, its essential existence, prior to, independent of and, one might say, indifferent to human existence. So, “We met it there and we will leave it there,” (Campbell, 50s, Jimmit). That is to say, nature—in a sense that includes and extends beyond particular material objects such as trees and animals—existed before humankind came along and it will exist after humankind is gone.

The concept of nature as a “real entity, in and of itself ... separate from social practices and human experience” (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:1) with causal powers and “processes we can neither escape nor destroy” (Soper, 1995:156) has been linked to ecological discourse—specifically to environmental/ecological realism—and thus to a scientific (or scientistic) view of the world. Soper and Macnaghten and Urry associate the concept with a belief in a nature governed by physical laws that are observable or discoverable via the natural sciences. This, I believe, overlooks the ways in which, for more than a few people, nature’s enduring presence, powers and processes are understood through the lens of religion rather than, or as well as, science. In such views, the “structures, process and causal powers that are

constantly operative within the physical world” (Soper, 1995:155) are possibly explainable via the laws of nature, but are ultimately attributed to the power of God. Given that this is probably not a particularly uncommon or unconventional worldview, it is surprising the lack of consideration it has received in academic debates within geography about discourses of and human relations to nature (Kong, 1990; Holloway and Valins, 2002; Slater, 2004; Buttimer, 2006; Proctor, 2006; Kong, 2010). This neglect persists despite recommendations that

Geographers today might well reflect more carefully on global evidence of ways in which religion is today influencing the emerging patterns of human behavior on the surface of the earth (Buttimer, 2006:201).

Ideas of humankind’s relationships with nature as mediated and influenced by religion have received more attention in other fields of academia, including environmental philosophy and ethics and, unsurprisingly, theology. Much of the work in this regard has been influenced by Lynn White Jr.’s 1967 essay ‘The historical roots of our ecologic crisis’, which has been called “one of the most significant articles to appear in environmental studies in the second half of the 20th century” (Minteer and Manning, 2005:166). White asserted that

What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. ...Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny—that is, by religion (White, 1967:1205).

White went on to argue that even though we might appear to be living in a “post-Christian age” (White, 1967:1205), the anthropocentrism evident in modern relationship with nature has its roots in Western Christianity, which is, he claimed “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen” (White, 1967:1205). In White’s view Christian dogma has not only “established a dualism of man and nature, but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (1967:1205). According to White the attitudes to nature that brought about environmental crisis were fundamentally Christian, even though most people did not recognize them

as such. Therefore it is necessary to “reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man” (White, 1967:1207).

White was not the first to discuss the relationships between religious faith and nature (Sheldon, 1989), nor was he the first to be critical of Christianity’s anthropocentricity in this regard. Aldo Leopold, for instance, lamented the tendency to see nature as a commodity rather than as a community and represented this tendency as having Biblical origins (Leopold, 1970[1949]; Gatta, 2004). But it is White’s brief article that is credited with inaugurating an extensive debate (for reviews of the literature, see Sheldon, 1989; Minter and Manning, 2005; Jenkins, 2009) about Christianity’s influence on human relationships to nature, and the role Christianity can play in the formulation of an environmental ethic. Christian ecotheologians and others have argued that, contrary to White’s belief, Christianity offers firm theological bases for the development of a caring relationship with nature (Sheldon, 1989; Kong, 1990; Northcott, 1996; Jenkins, 2008), and it has been pointed out that secular environmental thought and writing often incorporate traces of sacred idiom (Gatta, 2004; Jenkins, 2008). However, theological and philosophical analyses have not been equalled by empirically-grounded explorations of how religion shapes people’s relationships to nature (Kong, 2010). Such research could be guided by the three questions proposed by Andrew Lustig (2009):

First, precisely how are nature and the natural understood as religious concepts; that is, in what ways are they normative? Second, what interventions into nature are obligatory, permitted and excluded by various interpretations of nature and the natural? ...Third, what moral insights might be gained not only from the religious traditions themselves, but also from critical reappropriation of traditions in light of other perspectives? (p. 234)

Ringel and Wylie in 1979 and Jaffe in 2006 proposed that religious institutions could be important instruments for the advancement of a conservation ethic in the Caribbean. In my view, efforts to inculcate a faith-based environmental ethic (and the study of how religion influences orientations to nature) would be enriched by recognition of the ways in

which religious concepts of nature are contextualized not only by theoretical precepts, but also by “different historical, cultural and geographical settings” (Lustig, 2009:240). Geographical study of the motivating force of religion in people’s attitudes and relationships to nature (Kong, 1990) would be enhanced by consideration of how religious sensitivities and sensitivities to nature are grounded in particular places and shaped by people’s practices (Kong, 1990; Minter and Manning, 2005; Buttner, 2006; Jenkins, 2008; Lustig, 2009). In order to understand the significance and implications of Dominican understandings of nature as God’s creation, it would be necessary to further investigate their thoughts about Divine order, humanity’s place in God’s creation, humanity’s relationship to God, nature as Dominica’s particular blessing, and the role of God and religious belief in their lives in general.

7.2 “The action[s] of nature”

Setting aside the idea of nature as made by God, I turn now to another common type of response to the question, “what is nature?” The responses described in the previous section can be seen as seeking to define the word nature. A second type of response involved descriptions of nature, rather than definitions: respondents answered the question not so much by explaining what nature is, but by giving accounts of what nature is like. To provide some examples, nature was variously described as beautiful, peaceful, inspirational, a source of enjoyment, calm and wellbeing. These types of description characterize nature in relation to human experience, affect and emotion.

Yet another way of describing nature was to do so in terms of particular activities and practices. Mrs. Joseph, for example, told me that “nature is good health, good food and being able to work the land and feed

yourself...That is my nature¹¹ and I love doing it.” Another farmer said that “Nature is being healthy and eating healthy and growing organic” (Kwame, 45, Dublanc), and strongly expressed the view that nature in Dominica means working the land and being able to feed and provide for oneself as a result. But work was not the only nature practice identified. An example of how nature was otherwise described in terms of doing is

Nature is waking up in the morning and hearing the birds outside, hearing the waves crashing on the shore and the beach, walking outside and walking around my area and coming back with six different kinds of fresh fruit, mangos, oranges, guavas, coconuts, berries, avocados—and this is just on my street! Walking out of the door and going to the river just down the road (Cassandra, 30, Shawford).

A forestry officer offered a similar description:

Nature is getting up every morning and looking at your green, breathing in fresh air, looking at the green forest, with no pollution, no big factories, so you breathe in fresh nice air, walking around on a day to day with the animals, looking at the birds, your plants... (Philip, 50, Wesley).

One way of analysing such responses would be to say that nature is *associated with* these practices. Similarly, one might highlight and discuss the concepts of nature that are revealed by the description of these practices. However, I wish to draw attention to the respondents’ choice to describe nature not as the setting for particular experiences or the context for particular practices, but as *being* the practices themselves. Other descriptions of nature in terms of activity highlighted the way in which nature itself is considered to be active. People’s talk about nature included a plethora of references to the things nature does: it changes, functions, regenerates, comes into balance. Birds sing, trees grow, rivers flow, the earth quakes. One of the most explicit

¹¹ Note the potential double meaning of the ‘nature’ here; in transcribing this interview, I realised that I was not certain what meaning the word was supposed to carry in this particular context.

descriptions of nature as activity was provided by the respondent who said that

Nature to my mind is ... whatever happens, happens.
That's nature, you know? It's the process of, sort of the
verb 'to be' of nature, the action of nature— it's the
process of something happening we're not controlling
(Alex, 48, Point Mulatre).

The thought that comes to mind when I consider these responses is about the possibility of incorporating into the repertoire of meanings attributed to nature one that considers “the verb ... of nature”, taking into account both the actions of the natural world and the actions of human beings in relation to the natural world. What I am proposing here goes beyond the idea of the natural world as the site or venue for certain activities or practices. I am suggesting a concept of nature as defined by people's practices. Consider this:

If we did not have any practices for working at desks or eating at tables, we would not encounter desks, chairs and tables as meaningful. We would encounter them as mere artifacts, requiring explanation (Spinoza et al., 1997:17-18, cited in Harrison, 2000:506).

Taking the example of a chair then, it seems to me that it is difficult to conceptualize 'chair' without both thinking of *a* chair and having a concomitant idea of the practice or act of sitting. Similarly, people's concepts of nature can be understood as involving both reference to particular material objects and ideas about the practices of...

This is where the analogy seems to run aground, because while sitting is the definitive practice associated with chairs, there is not—and, I would hold, cannot be—a definitive practice associated with nature. But it is not the idea of a definitive practice that is central to my proposition here, but rather the idea of practice as central to the concept of nature. If academic analysis of nature is not thwarted by the realization that 'nature' can have multiple and even oppositional meanings, surely it need not be thwarted by the reality that nature can have multiple and even oppositional practices.

Another difference between nature and chairs is that nature is thought of as active in a way that chairs are not. Therefore a concept of nature as defined in terms of actions and doings should take into account the doings of nature as well as the practices of human beings.

The idea I am proposing here has much in common with the idea of 'nature performed' (Szerszynski et al., 2003b) a conceptualization of nature which

might offer a sense of the essential vitality of all (including human) life, engulfing all the actions and processes that such life might entail (Szerszynski et al., 2003a:3).

I am intrigued by the possibility of "an ontology where performance [or practice or action] is the primal term, and stable object and subject are simply abstractions from this" (Szerszynski et al., 2003a:4), an ontology

which necessitates a different way of thinking about knowledge—not as static, or passive, but as active, distinctly relational, forming distinctive events and experiences by which it is possible to know more (Szerszynski et al., 2003a:4).

Based on the responses I have been discussing, it seems likely that such an ontology of nature might bear a close resemblance to how some people think of, understand and know nature, in practice and *as* practice.

Before I begin to discuss some of nature's collateral concepts, I wish to mention briefly one other type of response to the question "what is nature?" These are the response that consisted of a list of objects; for examples, "[Nature is] the sum total of pure water, clean air, trees, fresh food" (Wayne). I shall discuss these responses in no further depth beyond saying that they helped me to understand what were the sorts of material objects and features of the natural world that people had in mind when they talked about nature.

7.3 Nature and the environment

I direct my attention now to the first of four collateral concepts of nature, the concept of the environment. Several authors (Ingold, 1992; Soper, 1995; Macnaghten, 1998; Thayer, 2003) have discussed the tendency, particularly in ecological and environmentalist discourse, to equate nature with the environment, and to portray nature/the environment as threatened by human action and in need of protection. During interviews I solicited views on this equivalency by asking respondents if they thought 'nature' and 'the environment' were the same thing. This seemed to be the interview question that respondents found the most trouble in answering—Mr. Sutton exclaimed, "It's so difficult to explain!"—and it sometimes seemed that respondents were less than satisfied with the explanations they provided. With very few exceptions, it was stated that 'nature' and 'the environment' are not the same thing; the challenge for interviewees lay in expressing the distinction, or the relationship, between two concepts that are frequently conflated.

One straightforward brand of response pointed out that an environment can be built, social, or urban. That is, the word is used in ways that have little to do with nature or the natural world. In a similar vein, other respondents made the point that a person's environment is whatever is around them, natural or not.

Another common way of explaining the difference between nature and the environment was based on the idea that "the environment is what you make it, but nature is always there" (Jalen, 22, Salisbury). The environment, or our environment, is distinguished from nature by being something that we can construct, create and shape. Such a response involves an implicit notion that we cannot come and meet the environment in the same way that we come and meet nature, because while nature exists independently of our presence, our environments come into being only when we arrive and give them something to environ. So while nature is what we come and meet, the environment is what we come and make, not only by our actions on our

surroundings, but by our very presence in them. The idea, earlier discussed, of nature as being outside the realms of human creative capacity is also reflected in statements to the effect that “we can make an environment for ourselves, but we can’t make nature” (Helen). Mr. Sutton expanded on this idea with his explanation that even if human beings create an environment full of natural things—a park or garden or even an entire island—they will not have created nature.

It was on the basis of such a distinction between what humans can create and control and what they cannot that one respondent expressed the view that it was impossible to protect nature:

You can protect your environment because you have control over that, but you can’t really protect nature because nature is something higher than what you have the means to control. You can control what you put in the environment, like your pollution that you put in it.. But the other, nature, is bigger than what we have—bigger than our scope (Khadija).

Beatrice Pierre expressed a related opinion. In her view, because environments are created by people,

environmentally-friendly could involve going against nature to create a certain sort of environment that is not natural to the area... So environmentally-friendly is not necessarily nature-friendly.

The responses discussed so far have focused on how nature and the environment are different from each other. There were a few responses in which the interviewees sought to explain how nature and the environment, though not exactly the same, are closely related. Here are two examples:

The environment is part of nature. We are part of nature, but we are shaping it, shaping the rest of nature in a way that affects our environment ... We plus the environment form part of nature, but if we destroy the environment to do what we want to do, neither we nor the environment remain natural again. Nature is about the relationship between people and their environment... (Harrison, age unknown, Riviere Cyrique).

How you keep the environment can destroy the natural state of nature, or it can preserve it and keep it natural. ...So you have to work to preserve the environment, so as not to mess up the things that are natural. They work together, but they are not the same; if you mess up your environment, it will have an effect on nature and the natural conditions of things (Tony, 47, Bellevue Chopin).

In both these cases respondents stop short of saying that human beings can destroy nature itself. However, they do assert that our actions towards the environment can damage natural things. I would argue that while these responses seek to describe how nature and the environment are related, how the ideas work together, they are nevertheless grounded on the distinction identified previously, that is, that we have agency over our environment, but not over nature. They also hint, though tentatively, at a notion of nature as not just *things* that are not human-made, but also forces and processes that are not human-generated.

Earlier in the chapter I discussed instances in which nature was explicitly described as being certain practices. There was only one such response in relation to the environment: “the environment is how you keep your environment” (Philip). In general the verbs applied to the environment and relations to the environment were limited in type, to variations on make, protect and destroy. There were no descriptions of the environment as active (unless one counts the idea that the environment is what exists around us), and except in a few cases of people who identified themselves as environmentalists, relationships to the environment were not described with the same experiential or emotional liveliness as was the case for nature. Perhaps this is because nature is understood as, as some respondents put it, more real, more “actual, factual” (Joy, 29, Shawford), whereas the environment is seen as something “more abstract” (Joy), and “much more a concept” (Steven, 73, Check Hall/USA) than a tangible meaningful reality.

Earlier I pointed out that nature is thought of as existing independently of human beings, while the environment is thought of as being linked to human presence in and action on it. Nevertheless, people seemed to feel more of a

sense of connection to nature than they do to the environment. This finding fits with analysis presented by scholars (Berleant, 1992; Ingold, 1992; Proctor, 2009) who are concerned about how the term and concept of 'the environment' distances people from the world around them, diminishing any sense of connectedness and engagement. Berleant (1992) and Ingold (1992) advocate for new ideas of environment that emphasize relation and connection. Proctor (2009), meanwhile is concerned that as notions of nature become more wrapped up with notions of the environment, the sense of separateness that is associated with the concept of 'the environment' will begin to extend to people's thinking about nature.

Beatrice Pierre made the point that "we seem to be speaking interchangeably when we use 'environment' and 'nature', but they are not the same". Most of the people I spoke to were inclined to agree with her. The differentiations people make between nature and the environment are likely to have consequences for the delivery and impact of conservation messages. Perhaps, because people seem to relate affectively to nature in a way that they don't to the environment, it would be more effective to appeal to nature than to the environment? On the other hand, if nature is thought of as being beyond human control, maybe calls to protect the environment might be better received? It is beyond the scope of my research to answer these questions, but they suggest that the distinctions that people draw between these two closely related collateral concepts are not merely a matter of semantics for academic interest.

7.4 Nature and changing times

Kate Soper (1995) has written about the way nature serves not only as a spatial, but also as a temporal marker, such that past times and aged artefacts are seen as being more 'natural' than the experiences and items of the present. In her words:

The legacy of an earlier culture appears more 'natural', one may say, because it is a legacy—a fact not without its bearing on the rhetoric and politics of environmental preservation. ...Getting back to 'nature' is, in this sense, as much about getting out of time, or away from 'progress', as it is about getting into wilderness. ...The 'natural' is thus conceived conjointly in terms of propinquity to the space of 'nature' (rurality, wildness), and in terms of a temporal dynamic of relative distance from an always more 'historical' or more 'cultural' present. This double articulation of spatial and temporal conceptions is of the essence of the deployment of 'nature' as a normative idea and very manifest in the eulogizing representations of the pastoral tradition, where rurality figures not only a more desirable type of space, but also a more fortunate moment in time (Soper, 1995:187-188).

Soper suggests that people's nostalgic ideas about past nature and past relationships to nature are not necessarily indicative of "the actual history of the land" (Soper, 1995:191). Instead, or in addition, they are suggestive of how nature and the natural are conceptualized and contextualized in the present. It is on this idea that I base my discussion of Dominicans' ideas about how the passage of time and the advance of modernity have affected how people think about and interact with nature.

My interviews included questions about whether people believed that older generations—for example, their parents' or grandparents' generations—met nature differently and knew more about nature. I also asked if they thought that younger generations—for instance, children in primary and secondary school—perceive and experience nature differently from older folk. To some extent the answers to these questions provide direct information about how relationships to nature have changed with time. However, we should keep in mind that the intention was not to give an account of actual changes, but to investigate people's perceptions of these changes. The data gathered is therefore more usefully thought of as a means of insight into how people think about nature in the present, than as a chronicle of past orientations to nature. It should be seen as an exploration based on memory, rather than on history; that is, I am less concerned with how "processes unfolded over time"

(Holtzman, 2006:364) and more interested in how “subjects in the present remember and construe these processes” (Holtzman, 2006:364).

Nazarea (2006) has described how people know by remembering. Recollecting and considering the past are ways of orienting oneself to and making sense of the here and now (Lowenthal, 1975; Connerton, 1989; Legg, 2004; Nazarea, 2006; Holtzman, 2006). David Lowenthal has written that the past is “inevitably present ... previous experience suffuses all present perception” (Lowenthal, 1975:5-6). One might also say that present perceptions suffuse our ideas about previous experience (Connerton, 1989). Thus in the subsequent discussion, the things people say about relationships to nature in the past are examined in terms of what they indicate about how people think about nature and relationships to nature in the present.

7.4.1 “*They never thought about nature*”

One of the important ideas about the differences between past and present relationships with nature had to do with the existence of what one respondent described as “a consciousness of nature” (Peter, 50, Mahaut) and an appreciation for nature. Respondents who discussed the question from this perspective were generally inclined to express the opinion that people in the past lacked this consciousness, this appreciation for nature. Mr. Sutton put it like this:

They were not thinking of nature, weren't thinking of those things. People were just existing, what you thinking of nature for, huh? People were just existing. ...People didn't think about nature, never thought about nature, we just lived our lives.

Another example of this sentiment is found in the statement that

I don't believe our grandparents knew much about nature; all they knew is they were farming in a different way than we farm (Philip).

It was acknowledged that previous generations were highly reliant on nature, that nature was important to their life and vital to their livelihoods. Nevertheless, their relationship to nature was perceived as being largely unthought and unthinking.

People's discussions of this perceived lack of consciousness of nature involved different explanations of why this was. One was that the work of earning one's livelihood from nature was so onerous and demanding that past generations did not have the time to spend in contemplating the idea of nature.

Well, in their time, in their time it was different because of the fact that, I mean, people mostly looked towards survival more than anything else, so as to the consciousness of nature, there wasn't much emphasis on that (Peter).

A present-day echo of this sentiment is found in the words of the farmer from Giraudel who, when I informed her that I was doing research about people's relationships to nature, said, partly in jest, "Nature? I don't know anything about nature, I know about work!"

Another explanation related specifically to the consciousness of nature as involving awareness that nature is at risk and in need of protection. For instance, one respondent mused that:

I wouldn't say that my parents knew more about nature, but that they knew from a different point of view. They knew the importance of what they had, yes, [and] valued it because it was their lifestyle and they appreciated what they had, but they didn't necessarily know or think that they should preserve what they had, because they thought they would have it for ever. They didn't think it would run out or that it wouldn't be preserved for a long period of time (Cassandra).

In responses of this sort what is being highlighted is past generations' perceived lack of, as Ringel and Wylie (1979) might put it, a conservation ethic. However, such responses are not best read as evidence that past generations had a careless or casual relationship to nature. Instead they serve

more usefully as an indication of how *current* thinking about nature is influenced by the idea that nature is “being damaged” (Jalen) and that there is therefore a need to take steps to “preserve what we have” (Philip). Take, for example, these comments:

Probably [in my parents’ day] there wasn’t much understanding as to what makes a hurricane more intense and that kind of thing. How destroying the environment contributes to global warming and how global warming contributes to the intensity of hurricanes and the frequency and that kind of thing. ...We see, more recently we see a lot of things happening that didn’t used to happen, probably ten or 15 years ago in terms of, like sea swells, although in my day I have seen the sea come and take houses and thing. There were more, when I grew up as a boy, there were more houses on the bayside. Okay, like right now you probably have like two lines of houses on the road, but probably when I grew up we have three and four lines of houses. So now that we are more aware of this kind of thing so it makes us more conscious and some of us, I mean, more determined to really preserve nature than they were in their time (Peter).

Remarks such as these are not necessarily a reliable testimony as to whether or not Peter’s parents had a consciousness of nature. However, they are certainly informative about what he thinks a consciousness of nature involves—being “determined to really preserve nature”—and about the information, ideas and experiences that have influenced the development of his own consciousness.

Overall, I am just as sceptical about Dominicans’ claims that their parents “never thought of nature”, had no “consciousness of nature” and therefore “basically knew less about nature” (Jalen) as I am about Ringel and Wylie’s assertion that Dominicans lacked “a concept of nature as such” (1979:42). Indeed, I find it necessary to counter my respondent’s opinions with my own dissenting view, and to express my disagreement with the perception that past generations had no concept of nature. Mr. Sutton, the respondent quoted above as insisting that people in the past weren’t thinking of nature, also told this anecdote, referenced previously in chapter 6:

[My parents] never specifically told me about nature. My father would tell me to come and put my hands in the ground and tell me this is God's soil, it is not dirty, it belongs to God, God's soil is not dirty, it's man that dirtying the soil, but as a young boy, that didn't mean anything to me.

It is possible, even probable, that Mr. Sutton's father would not have used the word 'nature' (or its *kwéyòl* equivalent¹²) in reference to the sentiments being conveyed above. He might not have thought of the lesson he was trying to teach his son as being a lesson about 'nature'. But it does not necessarily follow from Mr. Sutton the elder's (hypothetical) unfamiliarity with 'nature' as a signifier that he had no ideas about or concepts concerning the materialities and metaphysicalities signified by the word. Indeed the account provided above would seem at odds with such a supposition. I cite this anecdote not simply to argue against the idea that Dominicans of past generations did not have a concept of nature, but as a counter to the closely related, but not identical, view that they did not have a thoughtful or reflective relationship with nature. From Mr. Sutton's story, it seems evident that not only did his father have firm ideas about (what we would refer to as) nature and about humankind's relationship to nature—ideas that even included an inkling of a conservation ethic—but also that these ideas were of some significance to him, in that he made an effort to impart them to his young son.

Of course, this single example does not provide any firm basis for general speculation about past generations of Dominicans and their tendencies to engage in environmental philosophizing, but it does call into question the idea that their relationships with nature were unthinking and unconscious.

¹² In their 1979 essay, Ringel and Wylie noted that there was, to their knowledge, no *kwéyòl* word for nature (p. 40).

7.4.2 “They were always out in nature doing something”

The other main group of ideas about how people in the past related to nature centred around the perception that in the past people had far more direct contact with and experience of the natural world because they spent more time “in nature” (Eric, 32, Bath Estate). Respondents provided a variety of examples, often drawn from their own family histories, to illustrate this point. One of the most detailed and evocative accounts of this sort was provided by an organic farmer from the west coast village of Dublanc. I quote him here at length:

When I was growing up with my parents, I used to pay attention and would see that my mother and them would go up in the garden and I would go up with them. They would fertilize the plant with ashes and food peelings and things, just putting it around the roots. They would pick the food, catch some yellow crabs from the river, take some coconut, take the heart of the tannia leaf and chop it, or take the dasheen stalk and strip it with the knife and cook it with the provisions and the coconut milk and some fresh fish or crabs or crayfish from the river. My father used to go to the sea early and raise up his fishpot, and we also used to bathe in the river. They used to cook on wood with fresh water from the river, no pollution nothing, healthy food. My father made a squeezer from the tree and used to go and cut the cane and catch the juice in a calabash and make cane juice and cane syrup; we didn’t know sugar, we used to use the cane syrup to sweeten everything. Fresh cow milk from the cow straight and healthy, fresh roasted fish that my father would get right from the sea (Kwame).

This description and others like it draw attention to the way in which past generations’ personal and practical experiences in the natural world were essential aspects of their way of life; they spent more time in the forest or on the farm because they relied on the resources of the forest and farm for their livelihoods. One can detect also the embeddedness in local place and practice that is one of the key characteristics of traditional knowledge (DeWalt, 1994; Agrawal, 1995).

Respondents used accounts such as these as evidence that previous generations had more knowledge of nature than people do today. In such cases the sentiment being expressed did not seem to be that the practices described allowed their parents or grandparents to acquire knowledge about nature, but that these practices and activities *themselves* constituted knowledge of nature. (This is reminiscent of the instances, discussed earlier in this chapter, in which respondents described nature by talking about their practices and activities.) One might say that the knowledge being referred to was embedded and embodied in people's practices, such that they had "*direct* knowledge of their environments in the course of their practical activities" (Ingold, 1992:40, emphasis in original).

Thinking about knowledge in this way brings to mind Tim Ingold's notion of dwelling. Ingold shuns a cognitivist model of the world in which

we must know the world before we can act in it, and knowing consists in the organisation of sensations impinging upon the passively receptive human subject into progressively higher-order structure or 'representations' (Ingold, 1992:45).

If we adopt, as Ingold does, a dwelling perspective, catching crayfish, establishing a productive garden in the heights, and navigating the forest are not thought of as activities that are preceded and thus guided by intellectual or representational knowledge concerning nature (note that in saying this I am not arguing that intellectual or representational knowledge are absent). Rather the various doings alluded to by respondents *are themselves* knowledges concerning nature. It is not that one is able to do these things because one has knowledge about nature, but rather than one's being able to do *is* one's knowledge of nature—knowledge in the sense of know-how, rather than knowing about.

There was an overall sentiment among respondents that this traditional knowledge had declined because people now have less direct experience of nature than they did in the past:

They were always out in nature doing something, however these days because we don't walk in the field that much we're not that in tune with it as they would have been (Eric).

My initial inclination was to attribute this to social and economic changes in Dominica that have resulted in people being less directly reliant on the land for their livelihoods. However, this was not the reason typically given by respondents. They cited a different influential factor: the intervention of modern technology. A typical expression of this view came from the respondent who opined that there is less knowledge of nature now because “we live in a more modernized world than their time” (Male, 38, Newtown). Some went on to describe practices that had changed as a result of access to modern conveniences, as in the following examples:

I think the old people spent more time in the forest and enjoying nature. We always use our vehicles, but they walked all the forest, so I think they would have understood nature more than us (James, 57, Newtown).

Compared to back in the day, technology ... has made a big difference. Just 30 years ago, in the absence of washing machines and transportation, people would have had to be more reliant on animals for transportation, the rivers for water, dependent more on the fruits of the trees, fire for light (Khadija).

Others cited examples of using the sun, rather than watches and compasses, to tell time and direction, of the greater awareness, in the absence of electricity, of lunar cycles, of using forest trails before there were paved roads, and of how children and women used to go to springs and rivers to collect water before it was piped to their homes. What is being presented here as a contributing factor to the loss of knowledge about nature is the constant advance and adoption of technology that reduces our reliance on nature, rather than a historical shift away from a peasant mode of existence and reliance on the land *per se*. As such, even today a peasant farmer with a four wheel drive vehicle and a digital watch would be considered less close to nature than a peasant farmer who walks a forest trail to his garden and uses the sun to tell him when it's time to break for lunch. Technology

“advance[s] you, but pulls you away from the natural aspects of things” (Jalen). In the absence of technology, nature is “more glaring to observe” (Peter) and everyday life affords more opportunities to acquaint oneself with the functioning of the natural world.

I have referred to people’s ideas that past generations knew more about nature. In some cases, thoughts about how knowledge of nature has changed over time were expressed in terms of differences in kind, rather than differences in degree. In some cases these differences were attributed, as previously discussed, to the different kind of relationship that older generations had with nature. These generations “would have lived with nature in a different way” (Bertha), and “were farming in a different way than we farm now” (Philip); Dominicans today “have moved away, with development, from the traditional way of living that our parents knew” (Lewis, 45, Layout). Previous generations are thought to have known nature differently because they lived with nature differently than most Dominicans do today, the implication seeming to be that in past times, people lived more closely with nature.

Other respondents framed the issue less conclusively, by explaining that the elders knew different things about nature. There is a certain ambiguity here: “different things” in this context could mean “different from what we know today” or it could mean “a variety of different things”. The latter would imply that the elders had a richer knowledge of nature than is the case for most people in today’s world. Despite the element of ambivalence here, the general notion seems to be that there are things that were general knowledge in the past that are far less widely known today. One respondent made reference to how in the past people

could figure out bush and as the years have gone on that knowledge has been lost; ...people would recommend certain herbs for certain things, right now you find that our knowledge of herbs is basically non-existent” (Eric).

In a similar vein, Keith talked about how his Kalinago elders had forest skills, like being able to extract gum from the *gommyé* trees, that have not been extensively passed on to younger generations.

It is worth noting that the opinion that over time certain knowledges have been lost does not necessarily mean that the overall state of knowledge about nature has declined. Difference need not necessarily mean diminution. Rather, it is possible that as certain kinds of knowledge have been lost, so have other kinds of knowledge been acquired. In one aspect, the difference is seen as being between academic knowledge and practical knowledge: respondents would point out that what the old folk knew “wasn’t a book learning thing” (Ann Pierre), that “we read in books and gain some knowledge, but they learnt it on their own” (James).

7.4.3 “Modern science vs. old science”

I wish to take some time here to look a little more closely at some of the distinctions people made between the older, traditional types of knowledge and newer ways of knowing nature, particular those associated with science. This will serve as a further exploration and development of some of the ideas discussed in chapter 5 about systems of nature knowledge; here the discussion will include more consideration of some Dominican views about the similarities and differences between traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge of nature. This discussion will draw primarily on the ideas expressed by two particular respondents. One, Frederick, is an environmental consultant by profession. The other is Joe, to whom previous reference has been made in chapters 4 and 5. I use the views of these two respondents because they were the two who addressed most explicitly the relationship between traditional and scientific knowledge. Additionally, they used a very similar example to illustrate this relationship but, as I show, they interpreted that example in distinctly different ways.

For reasons that will become clearer as the discussion proceeds, scientific knowledge in this discussion is understood to be more than just

acquaintance with scientific facts, such as (as discussed in chapter 5) the botanical names of plants or the geological age of mountains. Following Agnes Heller (1984), I distinguish between scientific knowledge and the incorporation of scientific facts into the corpus of everyday knowledge. Heller writes that in the latter case,

snippets of scientific information appear in such isolated form in everyday knowledge, detached from their own homogenous medium, victims of the pragmatism of everyday thinking (Heller, 1984:189).

So for example, Beatrice Pierre told me that, in her view:

older generations didn't necessarily know more about nature, but they lived closer to it. Some facts we know now, they didn't know, things that science has shown us.

Another respondent said that people of his parents' generation didn't know about

how global warming contributes to the intensity of hurricanes and the frequency and that kind of thing... they didn't have the information that we have (Peter).

These statements refer to acquaintance with scientific information, which "[is] not to be proved or disproved: [it is] simply taken for granted, like the local customs" (Heller, 1984:189). What Frederick and Joe discuss, however, is not just acquaintance with scientific facts, but rather a particular way of knowing, thinking and understanding nature, which they characterize as scientific.

In speaking of the wealth of knowledge that previous generations had about nature, Frederick said, "It's amazing the knowledge they had without the benefit of science." He provided some examples:

My grandmother says if you see lightning during the hurricane season, that's the end of the hurricane season, and I've been monitoring it and she's been right, you get rain but no more heavy winds. My mother said if it rains on Carnival Tuesday, there will be no dry season

for the year. My mother and grandmother understood the skies so well, the seasons, the weather, and they imparted a lot of stuff to me.

Later remarks gave some idea of what he understood to be “the benefit of science”, as he spoke of growing up raising chickens and learning

about the biology of the chicken, not through conventional science, but from the elders, and then when you started doing biology in school, you would realize things ... you get to observe them growing, you tend to them when they're sick, they reproduce, processes you don't understand and then *you study biology and that explains it to you* (emphasis added).

This idea that science *explains* commonly observable phenomena seems to be key to the distinction Frederick and Joe make between traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge. Other respondents also provided examples of how science and ‘book learning’ had helped to explain, or produce new understandings of, phenomena with which they were already familiar through experience and practice.

A respondent trained in agricultural science said:

I read a lot for work about agriculture ... and ever so often I will read something in a book and it will make sense to me based on my own experience in nature, will say oh yes, I know about that, I've seen it already. For example, the different levels of forests that you see when you start from the coast and go up the mountains; I had always seen it but never really took notice of it until I read about the different forest zones in a book, so then the next time I got the opportunity to go walking in the mountains, I really paid attention. Especially go up to Syndicate, starting on the coast and driving up the mountains, you get to see how it changes, just moving up a few hundred feet, the forest and climate and vegetation and wildlife can change (Wilson).

A beekeeper explained that although his family had kept bees while he was growing up, he didn't begin to understand bees properly until he “began to study the bees some more ... I bought some books and did some theory”

(Martin, 63, Jimmit). From these accounts, it would seem that, to paraphrase Frederick, “you see the what” and science “explain[s] the why and the how.”

Frederick told me that he has sometimes incorporated elements of traditional knowledge into the reports and assessments that he prepares as part of his work. He has done this by

find[ing] the science to understand what the farmers were telling me. ...Your source is the farmer and the local people so you gather the local knowledge and try to see if there's a relationship between what they say and your scientific understanding. But you would not report directly what they tell you, you would report what seems to you to be the scientific reason for the phenomena they observe.

He provided an example to illustrate this point:

People will say if you cut the tree in the wrong moon it will be infested with termites. I found, after six months of thinking about it, that what they were really noticing was that the life cycle of the termite coincides with the moon phases, so that if the termites laid their eggs in the trees and the tree was cut then they would infest the wood because there was this fresh sap that they would feed on whereas if they were allowed to hatch and leave the tree then you would get termite-free wood.

What Frederick is saying about science in this example is not just that it provides him with scientific facts, but that scientific understanding and ways of thinking allow him to use these facts to explain traditional knowledge, to come up with a “reason for the phenomena [observed]”. Frederick is describing here something akin to what Heller calls *intentio recta*, which involves a “curiosity about what things really are—what makes them ‘tick’—[that] is the everyday version of the scientific spirit of abstract theory” (Heller, 1984:190).

Overall Frederick does not appear to see any incompatibility between scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge. Rather, his discussion of them seems to be based on the belief that they are compatible and can be brought into productive and enlightening relationship with each other.

Additionally, his discussion of traditional knowledge is not characterized by doubt about its reliability, and he does not appear to be using science as a means to assess the legitimacy or ascertain the truth value (Agrawal, 2002, Nazarea, 2006) of traditional knowledge. While Frederick uses science to *explain* the observations or axioms of traditional knowledge, he does not speak of science as being necessary to *validate* traditional knowledge.

Joe sees things differently. In his view, the increasing reliance on modern science as a means of understanding and explaining nature is concomitant with (whether causally or consequentially was not clear) “a decline in belief”. In the days of his grandparents, he says, “the Carib person was very strong in nature”; they paid close attention to, for instance, the phases of the moon, and used lunar cycles as a guide for hunting, planting, fishing, forestry and medicine. This traditional belief in the forces of nature, and accompanying beliefs in “legend and spiritualism”, has diminished over the generations. These days, as Joe tells it,

the scientist comes around and tells you it's not the moon, [that's] nonsense you talking, and he will tell you about irrigation systems and nitrates and so on, so now you have modern science vs. old science.

Clearly Joe thinks of modern science as being, to some degree, not just incompatible with, but even antagonistic to, traditional belief about nature. He calls into question science's ability to furnish rational explanations for phenomena that the elders knew to be reliable. The example he uses to do this is much the same as the one provided by Frederick to show how science can help us to understand traditional knowledge. Joe says:

Most of the old buildings in Roseau were constructed maybe from Carib wood or by Caribs, cutting by moon phases with no treatment or preservatives or chemicals. ...If you cut in the dark of the moon, it lasts longer than if cut in the clear. In the 70s the Forestry Department made an experiment using the moon phase and they couldn't explain why but it happens.

Further to this, he suggests that modern science fails in other ways:

In those days as well, in the old science days, you had less chemicals. These days you cut a piece of wood and you paint it with all kinds of things and then you sleep under it and you inhale and then you say, "Oh Jesus Christ, I have cancer!" The Carib never knew that. You would cut at the right time, no chemicals, sleep under it very quietly and there was no problem and he would live very long, 100 years average.

Nevertheless, Joe thinks that the new science is insidiously replacing traditional knowledge and will, he believes, continue to do so unless "somebody stops it now to say our values are important".

Like Frederick, Joe expresses considerable confidence in the validity of local knowledge, but unlike Frederick, he voices some scepticism about the relevance and usefulness of modern science and its ability to complement or support local knowledge. This seems to be, in part, because for Joe local traditional knowledge about nature is distinguished not just by its accuracy or its origin in practice and observation, but by its close affiliation with the cultural traditions and associated knowledge systems of the Kalinago people.

In this regard, a closer look at Joe's lament concerning the "decline of belief" may be illuminating. One of the most straightforward ways of understanding this is to construe it as referring to the loss of Kalinago beliefs, where 'beliefs' refer to teachings and ideas, information about the world. This reading of his remarks would be in tune with the view, expressed by another Kalinago community leader, and previously mentioned, that the elders' skills and knowledge about nature had not been handed down through the generations.

Another possible reading involves seeing Joe as expressing concern over the declining epistemological status of Kalinago belief, in a modern context where the notion of (traditional) *belief* is compared unfavourably to that of (scientific) *knowledge*, such that knowledge implies justifiable certainty that the information known is true, whereas a belief is something that, lacking decisive proof, is merely accepted as true (but may well be shown to be incorrect). In this interpretation, the advance of, and emphasis placed on,

modern science and scientific knowledge renders Kalinago belief as epistemologically inadequate and ontologically inaccurate (“the scientist comes around and tell you it’s not the moon, [that’s] nonsense you talking”), thus contributing to the decline of said beliefs.

Yet another reading involves treating belief not as an epistemological category, but as a “feeling accompanying cognition” (Heller, 1984), or what Bertrand Russell (cited in Heller, 1984:206) described as a “feeling of affirmation”. Using this perspective, a decline of belief in relation to traditional Kalinago knowledge can be seen as referring not primarily to a loss of confidence in its validity, but to a dwindling emotional and affective attachment to and reliance on Kalinago knowledge systems as a component of identity and culture. The decline in belief can thus be seen as symptomatic of a wider phenomenon in which Kalinago-ness (for want of a more eloquent phrasing) has lost some of its strength and vitality as a basis for ‘the feeling of affirmation’ in relation to the Kalinago person’s perceptions and knowledge of the world. This particular interpretation is supported by the way Joe’s call to arrest the decline in belief is phrased, neither in terms of passing on information, nor in terms of proving the soundness of Kalinago observations, but in terms of re-affirming Kalinago values.¹³

These three interpretations of Joe’s statement concerning the decline in belief are not mutually exclusive or incompatible with each other. Rather, it seems that the phenomena posited are likely to be co-existent and mutually reinforcing. In any case, and at the risk of opening myself to accusations of equivocation, my exploration of what a decline in belief might mean in respect of Kalinago knowledge of nature should not be read as an assertion or lament that such a decline has occurred. Rather my intent was, as with all

¹³ It is important to note here that for the Kalinago people I interviewed, it was evident that there was a distinction made between Creole and Kalinago, the former being used to refer specifically and exclusively to Afro-Dominicans. It is far beyond the scope of this research to explore the criteria for and specificity of this distinction, but one of the implications is that Kalinago belief is seen to be imperiled, not just by the advance of what might be thought of as outside knowledge, in the form of conventional Western science, but by its subsumption into the corpus of Creole knowledge without adequate and explicit acknowledgement of its Kalinago origins.

the preceding (and subsequent) discussion of perceived differences between past and present knowledge of nature, to illustrate how people's opinions about these differences can also disclose their ideas about what it means to know nature, and their thoughts about how different modes of knowing have been operative in Dominica.

I close this section with a final quote from Joe, which shows that he does not necessarily think that traditional ways and 'new science' are completely irreconcilable:

[My children] are big people now, but I think they have the love for nature even though they may not be involved in it as I was and as I am. Where I would look for a boat from a *gommyé*, they would look at a ship from a *gommyé*. Where I am looking at conservation of crabs, they take it to a bigger level, and might think about making a river an experimental conservation area for crabs, and going on the computer and looking up information and so on. They are not necessarily traditional thinkers and users, they are modern thinkers and users as related to tradition. ...So we have a new generation, the old techniques are dying, but they are looking at it with a love for nature, and will probably take it in more scientific ways. ...They look at it now from a scientific point of view, but still with that love.

7.4.4 “The younger generation, I don't think they see nature”

Having dealt at some length with Dominicans' thoughts about how older generations perceived and related to nature in the past, I now consider their ideas about how younger generations perceive nature now. In soliciting people's views on this matter, I did not qualify younger by specifying a particular age range, although with respondents who had children or grandchildren, I usually made reference to “younger people like your children and grandchildren”. In other cases, respondents would make reference to a specific age group, or they would speak generally about “the youth” or “young people”. As a result, “younger generations” covers quite a wide range of ages, from six years old to the early thirties. It should be kept in mind, however, that these questions were not intended to produce

definitive descriptions of how people of a certain age group understand nature. Rather the responses served to inform further consideration of the temporal dimension of people's perceptions of nature and relationships to nature. In conjunction with replies to questions about past relationships to nature, they show more about how Dominicans perceive elements of continuity and change in experiences, meanings, values and knowledge with respect to nature.

People's thoughts on young people's relationships to nature in Dominica were generally consonant with their ideas about how past generations had related to nature, and it was possible to identify coherency in their perceptions of changing tendencies over time. For instance, where past generations were thought to have lacked a consciousness of nature and a conservation ethic, young people were generally thought to be more aware of human-caused environmental degradation and the need for environmental conservation. This awareness was credited to the prevalence of environmentalist and conservationist messages in the media, both local and international, as well as to environmental education at school. Although messages received via the international media might not specifically refer to conditions and locations in Dominica, some respondents felt that increasing young people's awareness of the value of nature in general has, by extension, served to increase their awareness of the value of nature in Dominica specifically. In this sense, young people were viewed as knowing more about nature than generations before them.

The younger generation, now ... they have more information to help them understand nature... (Peter).

Things that were being taken granted before, are being appreciated through education, mostly. There's a drive to educate Dominicans from primary school level about the need to keep the island clean and green... So there is awareness now, much more than there was before (Denis, 54, Morne Daniel).

[For younger generations] by virtue of the media, the types of media that we have, television, it has brought on, and not only in Dominica, throughout the world, it

has brought on an environmental crave, so to speak, where people begin to try to have more value for the environment (Andrew Magloire).

This knowledge, however, was not seen to correspond with a greater acquaintance or familiarity with nature in Dominica. In light of the distinctions made between nature and the environment, it might be posited that young people have greater knowledge of the environment, but less knowledge of nature. Overall, the general sentiment of respondents was that young people these days spend less time, and are less interested in spending time, actually engaging with the natural world.

The younger generation, I don't think they see nature, they spend more time watching TV, you don't see them playing sports, you don't see them going hunting, we used to go hunting with our catapults, you don't see them do that. I used to take time going hunting wild birds, you don't see them do that. So the young people, they more enjoy modernization and technology and so on (James).

I would say people are so influenced by the television that these things become secondary; they're more concerned about their nice sneakers and their things than about the rivers and the beach and their other whatever, and the whole socialization has changed because now they have a computer and go online and chat as opposed to let's go down by the sea and bathe or let's go by the river. As a young person you'd spend the whole day by the river, and that's how you'd hang out with your friends. But now you don't even leave your home, you sit in on the computer and you can chat to your friend from home. So I think the whole socialization because of the more modern age and the computer. So it is not at the forefront of their minds how to utilize nature in the same way like when I was a teenager (Denise, 36, Roseau).

In those days, no TV, no internet, so after school I used to go and look for fruit, go to the sea, go to the river, those were the kind of things that you'd do. So you are doing nature things, you are doing natural things, but you are not conscious of it. Whereas kids today don't have those things, they go and sit in front of a television, which is a waste (Mr. Sutton).

Consideration of these statements in conjunction with people's comments about past generations' practical knowledge of nature shows that Dominicans see a general trend in which the degree of direct experience of nature is declining with time. Additionally, explanations of why young people have less direct experience of the natural world are in accordance with the previously expressed views that technology and modernization distance people from nature. However, further explanations were offered to account for the decreasing tendency for young people to relate to nature as their means of livelihood through the practice of agriculture.

In a few cases, this tendency was unfavourably attributed to young people's aversion to honest hard work. However, it was more common to attribute this aspect of changing relations to nature to social and economic factors such as the dwindling profitability of agriculture and the fact that young people are increasingly better educated and have a wider array of career choices available to them.

I doubt that there are a lot of young Kalinago people interested in agriculture; it needs to be made attractive. ...My father grew five acres of bananas, under rough conditions. He had to cross the river to harvest his bundles of bananas, whether it was over-flowing or not. So— I going to do that? Why am I going to go with my children to do that? So that's where the interest can be lost a bit ... the young person doesn't want to go to the farm every day as you would have to with bananas (Keith).

You find because the agricultural sector nowadays, people see agriculture now as a lesser economic opportunity ... again you find people moving away from nature in terms of that. So they want an office job, they want that type of thing (Andrew Magloire).

The younger generation is not as into agriculture ... there are a few young people who are involved in agriculture and do well, but not a lot. At one time [this village] was a hundred-person farming community, but people started going to secondary school, finding jobs in Roseau, then you had the road network developing... So now people travel much more, and they have buses, the younger people go to school down

[in Roseau] and are working down there. Before, kids used to leave school at 15, so what else could they do at 15 except go to the land? (Bertha)

Young people are interested in growing vanilla, but there's no market for it now ... no-one goes into it because it won't sell. ...Children are turning away from agriculture, even though they learn it in school. I think maybe we need to show how it can be viable and lucrative; display positive models and examples. Young people now are more likely to work for a company or in tourism (Leroy, 70s, Petite Savanne).

Respondents who were farmers and parents tended to accept with equanimity their children's choices to eschew agriculture.

I have four [children], ranging in age from 28 to 24. [Their experience with nature is] far different from what we would do. First of all, none of them is involved in farming, all of them looked for the white-collar jobs. They don't have the experience in the farm to understand what it is to protect the environment and have that— they don't have that, I'm not ashamed to say (William, 50, Mero).

However, some expressed the wistful hope that maybe their offspring would return to the land, "maybe when they realize that it's the only way ... you never know who may come back to the land" (Helen).

Parents who described their children and grandchildren as having close and active relationships with nature would not only emphasize proudly their offsprings' exceptional love and affinity for the land, but they would also take credit for having fostered, through their parental involvement and examples, these important relationships.

I have two grandsons, very close to me, and ... they're very [like] me [in terms of relating to nature], with the fishing and so on. ...They do the gardening with me, and the beekeeping, and when they're not at school, they come and do a little bit of fishing also (Martin).

The younger generation, I don't think they see nature ... But my kids are nature lovers. When they were growing up I was out with them every other week. By

the time they were 8, 10, they had traveled the whole island and they just adapted to nature (James).

A corollary to this was the view that changing relationships to nature are in part due to changes in family life:

[Older generations] knew that if you did x , you'd get w instead of y , because of information they had learned from it being passed on from generation to generation. But now people send their children to school, but they don't have that family time where information is passed down and passed along, so ... we are losing some of the knowledge that we should retain, due to changes in interpersonal relationships, losing knowledge our parents would have had (Beatrice Pierre).

As, with this overall discussion of nature and changing times, such remarks about changing relationships to nature over time reveal a great deal about how the respondents value nature, and what they see as ideal ways of relating to nature and the natural world. They also show how ideas about nature and relations thereto are understood as being connected to tradition, modernization, social practice and family life. The use of this collateral concept has made it clear that ideas about nature are linked to wider ideas about society and the world in which people dwell, such that talk about nature in Dominica involves, though not always explicitly, talk about tradition, heritage, and social relations.

7.5 Nature and development

I move now to the third collateral concept, that of development. The discussion of nature and changing times, with the repeated mentions of technology and modernization, have already hinted at the ways in which ideas about development and ideas about nature are co-related. My interest in the perceived connection between nature in Dominica and Dominica's development arose from Lennox Honychurch's characterization of the relationship between human beings and nature in Dominica as a battle

(Honychurch, 1995), and the associated idea that nature in Dominica, in particular its mountainous terrain and dense forests, served to oppose and hinder development in Dominica.

Let's revisit the previously quoted extract from Honychurch's *The Dominica Story*:

[Dominica's] rugged landscape of blue-green slopes, rushing streams and cloud drenched mountain peaks has given the island a legendary beauty, a fatal gift some call it, which has created both major problems and great advantages for those who have lived there. More than most islands, the environment has guided the course of Dominica's history.

...[The] environment gave the early Caribs a natural fortress against the European settlers and kept Dominica uncolonised for a longer period than other islands. It prevented the development of very large estates and cut down on the profits of sugar and coffee. The forests gave the Maroons protection from slavery and later provided the freed slaves with land to begin a peasant society. Well into the twentieth century, the terrain made communications difficult and hindered development: Dominica's story is not only of battles between men, but even more so, the battle between man and the island itself (Honychurch, 1995:ix).

We see that Honychurch describes nature as offering both problems and advantages for Dominica's inhabitants. This re-reading of the excerpt further reveals that these problems and advantages are subject to a particular distribution. It is the Kalinago and African-descended people of Dominica who are described as benefiting from the island's environment, finding refuge in the forests and establishing their peasant gardens on the hillsides. European settlers, on the other hand, are portrayed as being persistently thwarted by nature, which resists and hampers efforts at conventional colonization. Nature in Dominica, it seems, was a friend to the island's colonized peoples, but an obdurate adversary to the colonizer. Such a rendering of human relationships to nature in Dominica, like other similar historical representations, could profitably be subjected to critical analysis that considers the implications and associations of intersecting concepts of

nature, culture, civilization and race. However, I will not undertake such an analysis here; in the following discussion, I shall restrict myself to discussion of Dominicans' ideas about whether or not nature hinders their country's development.

Overall, the responses to this question were of four main types. There were those in which respondents challenged what they perceived to be the conventional definition of the word "development". A second closely-related group of responses acknowledged that Dominica might be considered under-developed by some standards, but positioned this as something that might in some ways be to the country's advantage. A third set of responses was less concerned with challenging the terms of the question, and dealt more directly with ideas about how nature in Dominica hampered or helped development. In the final group of answers, people addressed the question in terms of prevailing attitudes to nature, rather than the characteristics of nature itself. I'll begin by examining the responses of the first group, which I think of as being the most development-sceptical.

7.5.1 "What is develop?"

Several respondents, in their consideration of the relationship between nature and development in Dominica, expressed the opinion that any discussion in this regard should involve an interrogation and critique of what constitutes development, and of the criteria by which a country's development is assessed. "The word develop is what might hold Dominica back," Beatrice Joseph mused, "because what is develop?"

It depends on what you refer to as development. Putting concrete structures and tall buildings may or may not be development. Development, yes, you need certain things. Certain things must go forward, but what matters is how much you have to get rid of to put in the new things (Martin).

Once we lose, once we cut down the trees or whatever we're doing to build [highways], we've lost them. And I don't see what we gain by that. You know, what do

you gain by getting—that's how I see it—from the airport in 45 minutes instead of an hour? What's the big deal, you know what I'm saying? ... I don't see that as development; I don't see the need for that development that a lot of people are asking for (Jason, 61, Salisbury).

Another respondent began her answer to the question about the relationship between nature and development in Dominica by declaring, "It depends on how you define development" (Cassandra). Alwin Bully, advisor to the Ministry of Culture, referred to "development, in inverted commas".

In this line of argument, respondents reject or at least devalue what they perceived to be the prevalent development standards against which Dominica is unfavourably assessed. The criteria most often cited by respondents were not economic metrics such as gross domestic product. Most often they spoke of development in terms of concrete, tall buildings and highways. The view was commonly expressed that their fellow Dominicans, especially those who had travelled abroad to other more 'developed' Caribbean islands or to extra-regional metropolises, misguidedly saw development in these terms, and therefore perceived Dominica as undeveloped and backward.

Persons who come from the rural areas, you know, or maybe with limited education and they've travelled. Gone to St. Maarten, gone to Barbados, and they see all this quote-unquote development. They come back here and say but look what are we doing with all this bush here, cut this thing down and build structures. So some see it as a hindrance or a sign of underdevelopment, you know? (David Williams, Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division)

This perception, deemed faulty by the respondents cited here, does not necessarily position nature as the *cause* of underdevelopment. In Honychurch's account as well as in the opinions of some of the more development-endorsing respondents, the characteristics of Dominica's natural environment are represented as hindering development; nature is presented as a reason for the country's ostensible lack of progress. In the responses currently under consideration, the problem described is that the

abundance of nature and the prevalence of simple rural lifestyles are perceived as *signs* of Dominica's lack of progress because progress is indicated by "concrete ... and tall buildings". Of course, the two perceptions of Dominica's under-development are not mutually exclusive. They are wholly compatible, in that Dominica's natural characteristics can be seen as both causes and persistent evidence of a lack of development. Both cases highlight the classic dichotomy between nature and culture, in which progress, development, civilization and improvement are seen to necessarily involve a movement away from a condition of what one respondent termed "naturalness" (Daniel, 51, Grand Bay).

It is this view that some respondents sought to counter. They proposed that development could, and indeed should, be measured using different sorts of benchmarks.

The word develop is what might hold Dominica back, because what is develop? Is it airports and railways or is it a better way of life? If it is a better way of living, then the nature and the nature island is of help to the country. But if you're thinking of skyscrapers and helicopters and infrastructure and that sort of thing, then being the nature island would keep us back (Beatrice Joseph).

[I am part of an organization whose mission is] environmental development; [by that] I mean personal betterment, rather than development. Personal and social betterment, rather than the classic idea of physical betterment, where environmental degradation is seen as a natural cost of that (Daniel).

It depends on what you see as progress. I think development is people healthy, smiling, having food to eat, good to their neighbours. So anything that doesn't lead to this is underdevelopment, a reversal of development, and in that sense, Dominica is more developed than other islands (Franklin, 40s, Roseau).

By these standards, Dominica would be better off than most of its Caribbean neighbours and more distant metropolitan places. Further to this, nature and

rurality would be seen as benefits rather than disadvantages, facilitating people's bodily, spiritual, and social health.

7.5.2 “Nature holding Dominica back has been a blessing”

A tour operator told me a story of travelling through rural Dominica with a group of tourists and having some of them remark in a disparaging way on the small size and seeming poverty of the houses in the villages they traversed. In response, he said, he pointed out that people had no need for large houses because they spent most of the time working and playing in the healthy open air; that they had no need for air-conditioning because they could just throw open their windows and enjoy the fresh cool breeze; that the lack of electricity meant that people appreciated moonlit nights all the more.

As he explained it, in presenting this rosy picture of the simple life and idyllic relations to nature in rural Dominica, he was seeking to contest the idea that material wealth, which he saw as one of the conventional measures of development, was commensurate with wellbeing. He was expressing a perspective closely related to that espoused by those who called for a reconsideration of the measures and values by which development is assessed.

Although closely related, the underlying reasoning here is not quite identical to that previously discussed. The earlier perspective involves an assertion along the lines of Dominica being well-off despite not having achieved the levels of so-called development observable in other islands and countries. The tour guide's representation to his clients involved what I would consider a slightly different move, that is, the insinuation that Dominica is well-off *because* it had not achieved the levels of development observable elsewhere. Both arguments are based on the idea that well-being and quality of life are just as important as, perhaps even more important than, economic and physical development. But where the first explicitly involves a critique of the word development, the second implicitly accepts the conventional meaning

of the term, but challenges the idea that Dominica's perceived underdevelopment is necessarily a disadvantage.

This sort of sentiment typified the second group of responses, in which respondents did not necessarily take issue with the proposition that nature in Dominica had hampered development, but acceded that this was the case and expressed the opinion that it was quite conceivably a good thing.

Well, I would say that it stops development and over the years, it's slowed down development because of our terrain, the mountains and [so on]. ... Nature holding Dominica back has been a blessing, because most countries now are trying to plant back trees and so on, and we have our trees. ...we don't have a deforestation problem in Dominica. So it's protected, nature has really protected [Dominica] (Marcus Pierre).

We have a lot of mountains and deep valleys and a lot of places are not easily accessible and maybe that is why it has remained so clean and green. If we were flat, we would have had skyscrapers and more physical development (Wilson).

We are very fortunate in that regard, there hasn't been too much of, you know, modernization or however you call it, too much of that nature. And now we're realizing the importance of that. ... So in that respect, I believe that there are many other islands that can boast that they have a lot of nature, and that is true, but at least on a sheer scale or proportion we can say that we are ahead of the others, we exceed the others in that respect. And I believe that it's a by-product of underdevelopment you know, strange enough, it's an irony in its own right. The fact that we haven't gotten industrialized, yet, as much as the other islands is partly responsible for that (Denis).

One pragmatic perspective on this issue was that the lack of development now serves to draw visitors to Dominica, and to make Dominica stand out as a unique Caribbean tourist destination. A related idea was that people in more developed places are increasingly in search of what Dominica has to offer, that instead of the trappings of development in the metropolis, people are seeing the value of a simpler life, closer to nature.

Nature is very much an important part [of tourism], because people who are marketing the tours or buying the tours have seen big buildings and traffic lights and all that, so don't want for them to be seeing the same thing here, we want to keep it real and as close to the origin as possible. I'm not saying that we want to be backward and not develop, but we want to develop in a way that is sustainable and in keeping with our, how do you call it, our nature isle (Lewis).

As a young boy, I used to hear that Dominica was a backward country... but for us, we realized we had something to capitalize on, not the sea and the sand and the beachside hotels, the white sand beaches... We just found out we had a plus there and we had it hiding. People are always asking for these things, Americans, Europeans... People come to Dominica and bawl wow, unbelievable! (Mr. Sutton)

One man offered a perspective that placed this in a specific historical context.

After 9/11 tourists are not looking for fancy hotels and multi-story accommodations and all those fancy sophisticated things. They are looking for nature, to get away to someplace simple and natural, away from towns and cities, to hike, to swim, to see waterfalls, and eat fruit and jelly coconuts and see whales and take it easy. They are looking for the simple and the natural because nature makes them feel safe; it's peaceful and quiet and safe (Trevor).

Conditions in Dominica are thus construed as appealing rather than adverse. This idea was further extended by those who opined that there is a growing realization globally that the path of development that most have been following has not produced the anticipated benefits, and has indeed involved substantial detrimental consequences, including pollution and despoliation of the environment. Seen in this light, Dominica is lucky not to have progressed as far along the path of development as other countries, because in doing so it has avoided misadventure, and is in a position to learn from others' mistakes in order to chart a corrective, alternative and more advantageous course.

Dominica is at scratch relative to the rest ... so this is a perfect place for us to take over, [to] influence and use

it as an example of how you develop using naturality (Daniel).

So all of this has kept us back from development, but hopefully has kept us away from colonial development and thus allowed Dominican development, because we are so far behind the times. So by the time we build up the country and are stepping up to the plate we'll have figured out how to do it based on mistakes made in other places. So we'll know where we don't want to be, and can't be because we don't have the white sand beaches and flat land which has been a poisoned chalice because it attracts the colonial, imperial, foreign, non-local tourism and development (Thomas, 47, Soufriere).

We see in these responses the re-occurrence of an idea mentioned previously in chapter 4, the idea that nature in Dominica protects itself and the island. Several respondents answered the questions in a way that suggested that they see nature as having some sort of agency, such that by preventing or slowing down development in Dominica, "nature is trying to be what it is, to make us rethink our plans and help us make better decisions" (Cassandra).

7.5.3 "Nature is why Dominica is developing"

The views I have hitherto discussed have in common that they incorporate, to varying degrees, some element of scepticism about orthodox notions of development. I turn now to a different set of views, those expressed by respondents who, rather than being sceptical, accepted and even endorsed the idea of development as a good thing, and as something to be desired. Respondents in this development-endorsing category expressed the opinion that "there are certain things that have to be done to move forward; we are moving into modern times and these are things that have to be done" (Mac, 39, Canefield).

This group of responses was the one in which it was most clearly stated that environmental conditions in Dominica could be problematic. This was typically discussed with reference to the island's mountainous terrain. Occasional reference was also made to the climate—heavy rainfall and the

occurrence of hurricanes—and to seismic hazards arising from Dominica’s volcanic character. Respondents pointed out that these factors made the development of infrastructure complicated and costly and posed problems for the longevity and maintenance of said infrastructure. However, it was suggested that Dominica’s thickly wooded mountains no longer pose as severe an impediment to infrastructural development as was once the case. From this point of view, while in the past it might have been true that Dominicans “live[d] in a land we cannot tame” (Ellis), advances in technology mean that it has become far easier (though still more difficult than it would be were the terrain less rugged) than it used to be to “tame the land” (Alwin Bully).

It is in this group of what I refer to as development-endorsing responses that we find people most unequivocally putting forward the idea that nature can help Dominica to develop. As with some of the development sceptics, tourism was cited as a case of how this might occur.

Nature doesn’t hold Dominica back, I think we stand now to use our nature to promote Dominica. Because of lack of pollution we can say that Dominica is one of the countries where you can come and breathe in fresh clean air, bathe in the river without any fear of skin pollution or anything (Lewis).

No, nature doesn’t hold back Dominica. Because most of the visitors you have coming are coming because of what you have: the nature, you haven’t got gold, you haven’t got silver, but you have nature, your forests, your mountains, your rivers, the greenery of your country (Philip).

More traditional means of using and relating to nature were also seen as advantageous.

Nature is why Dominica is developing because so many white people want to come here and put up tourism projects. Tourism only advertises nature, either active engagement or relaxation. In my opinion, you’re progressing sustainably if it can be sustained what you’re doing and nature helps that because it holds people back from doing anything too extreme. And

people who can't take the nature, they can't take it here in Dominica. Nature is helping us progress tourism-wise, and through agriculture, and helping it become a breadbasket for the Caribbean, in fishing. In tourism, it helps us to hold back from expanding too quickly, and becoming like St. Lucia (Adrienne, 55, Massacre).

I wouldn't say [nature] is holding the country back. It can help the country to develop. For example, the mountains and the trees and the climate and weather support agriculture and the production of good fresh food (Mr. Joseph).

Another type of answer described the potential value of some of Dominica's hitherto untapped or under-recognized resources.

We have 365 rivers and there may be countries that are dying for want of even one river. We have pure drinking water, and we can supply the world with water. Layou River sends out 54,000 gallons every day into the ocean. So we can supply 50,000 gallons of water everyday to somewhere. So that's a natural asset that we are not looking at it as an asset, like gold, silver diamond, oil, bauxite. We have wood, we have lumber, enough lumber to create a lumber industry if we can manage it properly, maybe just for light furniture, not heavy construction, we could supply neighbouring Caribbean islands with light furniture, giving it time to resuscitate itself, giving the forest time to regenerate (Joe).

Comparing these responses from the development-endorsing group to some of those from the development-sceptical group highlights how 'development', like 'nature', has different meanings. For several of those questioning the concept of development, the examples they provided were of physical development, the development of the built environment. Those who expressed the view that nature could contribute to Dominica's development spoke in terms of economic development and growth. It is worth noting that even some of those who expressed a degree of doubt about conventional ideas of development spoke, when questioned about Dominica's most important natural features or characteristics, in terms of natural resources and economic assets.

Clearly a full consideration of how Dominicans perceived the relationship between nature and development in their country would require a careful consideration, beyond the scope of this dissertation, of their understandings and conceptualizations of 'development'.

One of the beliefs underlying the view that nature in Dominica could and should be capitalized on to promote the country's development seems to be the idea that nature and natural resources are, as a respondent put it, "there for us, for us to use, to better life for us, to improve our lives" (Peter). I would venture to suggest that the idea of nature as being at humankind's disposal is a far more integral aspect of Dominicans' orientations to nature than might be inferred from its having arisen for the first time so late in the discussion (both in the context of this thesis and in the course of individual interviews). It is not an idea that was often explicitly expressed when people spoke directly about nature and relations thereto; it emerged only through the discussion of collateral concepts. I believe that its late, almost incidental, emergence can be seen as indicative of the deep-seated nature of the belief, its status as a sort of fundamental implicit assumption that becomes most apparent in the circumstance of a contextualized discussion of nature. Alternatively (taking a perhaps more pragmatic and less idealistic view) it could be that respondents felt that this was not the sort of thing that one should be heard to say about nature. Given the prevalence of conservationist discourses, expressing the idea that nature is there to be used—where 'used' could be extrapolated to signify 'exploited', with all that word's negative connotations—might have been thought of as verboten.

The idea that nature is there for people to use, however, does not mean that it's there for people to use indiscriminately, as they please. Respondents typically pointed out that people should strive to make wise and sustainable use of the resources that nature provides, so "we don't just finish them, that they will always be there" (Peter).

7.5.4 “You have to adapt your vision to the island”

Often, nature’s ability to contribute to development in Dominica was spoken of as a prospect, rather than an actuality. Some research participants, in speaking about the relationship between nature and development in Dominica expressed a degree of frustration that Dominica’s natural potential had so long remained, and continued to be, underdeveloped. For example, Eric, an engineer, expressed the opinion that nature in Dominica had been used as an excuse for under-development, when really the problem has been a lack of prudent planning and foresight on the part of the authorities. This falls into the fourth group of response, in which the question of whether or not nature hinders development is framed in terms of people’s attitudes to nature. The first group of responses I presented called for people to change their ideas about development. This last group suggests a need for people to rethink their ideas about nature, particularly ideas that position nature as a problem or a hindrance. Respondents suggested that it was unproductive, even counterproductive, to think of nature in these terms. For example:

It makes it more difficult to build roads, but it has not been a hindrance. Well, we can’t have as much, but I don’t know if I would call that a hindrance, [but] it’s more difficult. So as anywhere, you have to deal with what you have. If I’m a man, I have to deal with myself being a man. So at a certain level that’s an invalid argument; if we were flat it would be easier, but that doesn’t mean that it’s a hindrance (Daniel).

One might expect that views of this sort might rest on the logic that nature is intrinsically a good thing and thus it follows that it is erroneous to conceptualize it as a drawback or a hindrance. But this was not the line of reasoning that respondents pursued. Their argument was not framed in terms of whether nature in Dominica was a blessing or a curse, good or bad, but in terms of the simple reality that it just *is*. Nature is what it is and people should accept it as it is: “this is what we have, let’s work with it” (Mr. Sutton).

Another interpretation might be to see this perspective as one of tacit forbearance, in which, given their inability to change nature in Dominica, people have instead resigned themselves to it, perhaps even decided to make the best of it. But this would be, I feel, a misrepresentation of the position being advanced, in that resignation implies some element of disappointment with nature and its failure to align with one's desires and to meet one's expectations. A closer approximation of the idea under consideration would be to say that respondents are invoking the idea that nature in Dominica exists on its own terms and that, by extension Dominica (the island as a physical entity, not the country or the nation) itself exists on its own terms. This, again, reflects the sentiment that "we came and met it here". As such, the longstanding discourses that present Dominica's nature as a problem are misguided and even, as one respondent put it, "arrogant" (Mac).

This perspective does not exclude the possibility—which is, in any case, a necessity rather than a possibility—of using nature to develop and of appreciating nature's usefulness. Rather, the idea seemed to be that the way in which Dominica's nature is unfairly constructed as a problem prevents people from thinking about it creatively, positively and productively, and thus keeps the island and its people from fulfilling its potential:

It wasn't created for you, so you have to adapt your vision to the island and see what it's calling out to be created, instead of what you want to impose ... I think you should develop something by starting with what you have ... [people] aren't taking time to see what Dominica is and allowing that to fire their creativity (Barbara).

Before there was the concept that the place [is] full of mountains, you can't develop the place ... that you have to start pull down the mountains. Nonsense! This is what we have, let's work with it (Mr. Sutton).

Some respondents were of the view that Dominica's past struggles to develop are attributable, not to the nature of the island, but to the misguided views and objectives of the would-be developers, and an unwillingness to work with and work around nature. Such perspectives pose a challenge to

the characterization of Dominica's story as a story of "the battle between man and the island itself" (Honychurch, 1995:ix). Perhaps man [*sic*] was battling the island, but the island wasn't doing anything but being, unavoidably, itself. Indeed, rather than seek to find fault with nature, one respondent suggested, people would do well to turn their critical gaze on themselves; to examine their own natures, as it were.

Throughout the preceding discussion, I have sought to highlight the diverse ways in which Dominicans are negotiating long-standing ideas about the 'problem' of nature in Dominica, conceding in some aspects, but forcefully contending in others. They are responding to and repudiating old colonial narratives of Dominica and contesting Dominica's reputation—not yet obsolete—as an underachiever in the Caribbean. Further to this, they are, in an independent, post-colonial Dominica, working out the relationship between Dominica the island and Dominica the country.

7.6 Nature and natural

The final collateral concept addressed in this chapter is that of natural and naturalness. The relationship between the concepts of nature and natural was initially treated by some respondents as almost tautological: "well, nature is natural" (Lewis) and "you get the word natural from nature, so..." (Mr. Sutton). However, the ways in which people developed their answers to questions about the meaning of the word 'natural' provided insights on a new and significant dimension of how nature in Dominica is perceived and understood.

In speaking with Dominicans about the meanings of 'nature' and 'natural', it emerged that there were common understandings of being natural that were only peripherally related to the state or status of the external natural world. In these understandings, natural is not a descriptor for features of the biophysical environment, but rather a characteristic of a way of life and of particular ways of being in the world.

To be natural says a lot, I don't know how to begin. To be natural is to be almost like together with the earth, no artificial flavours ... [using] everything naturally from the earth, or to simply be like a fish in the sea, free, or like a parrot for example (Carlos).

In what might be considered its most straightforward sense, "being natural" was clearly related to the idea of 'natural' as not artificial, as untouched or minimally altered by human intervention. Naturalness as a human condition entails "getting away from man-made things" (Marcus Pierre), not wearing make-up, eating natural, preservative-free foods, "using what comes out of the earth" (Cassandra), avoiding things that are artificial.

As natural as you can be, as close to your creator as possible, we can be natural. If we are now drinking coca-cola we are not totally natural because we are using something that is manufactured, but if you go out in the bush and eat an orange, even though an orange is a synthetic human introduction of fruit, but still you are making use of something in its natural state. Using red pepper as lipstick would be natural, or not using lipstick in the first place, that's natural. Putting fertilizer is not natural, because the earth has its natural cycle of fertilizing itself. If you use an organic system of living, that's natural (Joe).

Here I wish to draw attention to how naturalness is a feature or quality attributed to people as a result of their interactions with certain types of things. Some things, for example, things that "come[] out of the earth" produce, or at least promote or enhance naturalness in the user, while things that are artificial diminish naturalness. To a degree then, a person's naturalness is the effect of external material things acting on the embodied self.

A complementary understanding of 'natural' reverses the direction of action, such that naturalness is associated with, or identified as arising from, the self's action on the external world. In this sense 'natural' was said to mean "letting things flow and grow ... in their own way" (Bertha), "letting [things] happen the way they are supposed to happen" (Joy), "working with the shape and form of something" (Barbara) rather than seeking to alter or

embellish it. Here it is the person who is acting on things, rather than the other way around, with the understanding that naturalness involves acting in a way that does not introduce artifice to the external world.

In further elaborating on this concept, respondents often used the example of gardens, in particular flower gardens. In the context of a garden, natural would mean allowing the plants in the garden to grow as they were inclined to do, without pruning them into ornamental shapes or seeking to exercise too much control over their profusion. Naturalness on the part of human beings, then, involves allowing things to express their essential character, accepting and respecting their nature and working with it rather than against it. Artifice is introduced when one thinks that one can improve on nature by addition or embellishment, and when one begins “planning and sculpting” (Joy) and imposing one’s own design. What results “is not nature, it’s art” (Joy), is “not nature, it’s culture” (Ellis).

It is perhaps a similar sentiment that underpins another idea about what natural means, the idea that natural is “appreciating what we have” (Roberta, age unknown, Riviere Cyrique), “having a keen sense of what is around you and the things of life” (Jalen). To be natural is “to be wise, to be humble, to be patient and also to be satisfied with what you have and what is around you, because you can learn from these things” (Mac). The person who embraces such a way of being lives simply within their environment and is “one with nature” (Roberta) and “at one with their surroundings” (Jalen). I believe that this understanding of naturalness is grounded in the Dominican context where much of ‘what is around’ is nature. This was alluded to by the respondent who said that to be natural was

to appreciate the environment around us, to live as simple as possible, to eat as much fruit and vegetables as possible, to enjoy living on an island and we have the sea and the rivers and the mountains, and what blessings these are (Wilson).

But it is not simply living amongst nature that confers naturalness; appreciation is important. As such, “there [are] a lot of people in Dominica

who are in nature, but they are not natural" (Ellis) because they do not appreciate the forests and the mountains, the things that Dominica has.

It should be noted that the questions about what nature and natural mean usually followed, though not immediately, earlier discussion about nature's effect on Dominica's development. It is possible that the idea of contentment with what one has, and with simple living, is part of a reaction to the idea that nature has held Dominica back or has been somehow disadvantageous.

Thus far, the expressions of what natural means have involved, in some way, human orientations to and interactions with the material reality of nature. But another way of understanding 'natural' in Dominica made no reference to the natural world at all, nor to attitudes towards or interactions with the materiality of nature. Rather, 'natural' was explained as meaning "to be yourself, to not put on what is not from you or what will make you be not yourself" (William). Being natural in this sense is being authentic, being one's self, "just doing what comes to mind, [not letting] anybody pressure you into doing what you don't want to do" (Ann Pierre). It means being "authentic, authenticity, authentic is natural, you know—the real thing" (Sobers Esprit, Ministry of Tourism). To be natural is "to be you, to live within your environment, not influenced by artificial things or them outside things" (Peter). "Natural is being what it is, from my point of view, it's being myself" (George, 66, Goodwill/Bioche). It becomes evident that the idea of nature being deployed is that of nature as "the essential quality and character of something" (Williams, 1976:184; see also Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:7).

Alwin Bully eloquently explained that to be natural is "to give expression to that inner self that we all have. Looking at the self, that is our true nature..." In his view, the concept of natural is

based on feelings of truth in expression [that have] to do with if we are being naturally ourselves or if we are using our masks or if we are pretending to be something we are not (Alwin Bully).

This concept of naturalness does not derive from ideas of the natural world. However, it extends itself to objects of the natural world, such that

nature is the soul of a being, whether a human being or an organic being like the earth or a river ... to me that's what nature is about, the spiritual expression of the truth of an organism (Alwin Bully).

Here the reference to "organisms" did not include only creatures such as plants and animals that are alive in the strict sense; it was extended to rivers and mountains, in that they were manifestations of "the life force which is the planet itself" (Alwin Bully). Other respondents also discussed this concept of nature as living things, or rather as lively things. So rivers and the sea, for example, were named as things that, although not living, nevertheless, by being in constant motion and as an environment for life, produced a sense of liveliness. Further expansion of the concept, in a direction pointed out by Mr. Bully elsewhere in our interview, would consider the way seismic activity in Dominica, earthquakes, the high concentration of volcanoes, and the constant bubbling of hot pools and the eruption of steam from fumaroles make it seem as if the very bedrock of the island is alive. Similarly, the land's surface is also constantly changing, reshaped by landslides and slips, which are lively in their essence, but can be deadly in their effect.

In some cases people explained human relationships to nature with reference to their ideas about human beings' essential nature. Some respondents spoke of people's desire to be in nature as a natural tendency, an idea with similarities to Edward Wilson's (1984) theory of biophilia, the theory that human beings are instinctively attracted to nature and to other forms of life. It was said that it is a "natural human thing" (Jason) to want to practice agriculture. It was also argued that it is natural for people to want to better their situations, because "man is made for progress" (Denis).

The idea of nature as the essence of a thing, the truth of an object or organism, adds new dimension to understandings of nature in Dominica. Dominica's nature is not just nature *in* Dominica, but the nature *of* Dominica,

its fundamental quality of being. Dominica's trees, mountains, rivers, earthquakes and volcanoes are aspects or manifestations of the island's intrinsic character, its quiddity. Thus utterances about how the island protected itself from European invaders, or about how nature in Dominica heals itself, or about how nature would take the place over if it weren't for human intervention can be understood as allusions not only to nature's general tendency to assert itself, but as particular place-based references to Dominica's tendency to express its essence, its true character as a nature island. At the risk of tautology, the idea being expressed is that it is Dominica's nature to be natural.

The idea of Dominica's nature protecting itself was expressed not just in terms of physical resilience or resistance, but in terms that were somewhat more metaphysical. Even today Dominica protects itself by being "very selective in whom it attracts" (Cassandra). It draws and welcomes those who are natural, who are interested in getting away from man-made things, who are willing to go with the flow, and who will appreciate and respect the island and its nature. It deters people who are "not in tune with nature" (Cassandra; Vernon, 50s, Bellevue Chopin), who are not willing to accept it for what it is, or who seek to exploit it or impose upon it. Several people said to me that Dominica chooses the people it wants, and if you are not suitable—that is, suitably natural—the island, as a place whose "nature is so strong" (Marcus Pierre) may disappoint or overwhelm you and will eventually expel you. The people may welcome you, but the island itself "will not be for you" (Cassandra). And so Dominica, the island, continues to protect itself from ill-intentioned outsiders, and in so doing protects the country from the unfavourable influence of other cultures.

A corollary of this is the implicit association of natural and local. This sentiment is perhaps best captured by a passing remark made by Beatrice Joseph: "nature does not provide foreign things". It is detected also in comments that natural means "not influenced by ... them outside things" (Peter).

The most frequent expression of the association between local and natural arose in relation to food. Agriculture and the food thus produced are important aspects of Dominicans' orientations to nature. It should therefore not be surprising that a commonly cited aspect of what it means to be natural in this way involved eating well, eating healthy, eating natural, local food, 'eating what we grow' (see Figure 14). In discussing changing practices of nature in Dominica, people almost invariably highlighted the contrast between eating local, natural foods and eating imported, foreign, processed fast foods.



Figure 14: "Eat what we grow": mural at Pointe Michel (photo by author)

When I write of eating natural, local food, it should be understood that this is not just a convenient amalgamation of two entirely separate concepts, "eating natural food" and "eating local food"; there is substantial intersection and overlap between the notions here of 'natural' and 'local'.

In part this seems to be connected to the perceived natural qualities of Dominica as a particular place, as a place characterized by the abundance and richness of nature. Again, if we look at people's talk about food as an aspect of nature and the natural in Dominica, Dominica's productivity and

the resulting goodness of the food, its flavour and wholesomeness, is attributed to the island's fertile soil, good climate, and abundance of clean fresh water. This does not make the food more natural, of course, but it means that local fruit, vegetables and ground provisions are perceived to be naturally better, tastier, more flavourful and more nutritious, because of the specific beneficial qualities of nature in Dominica. There is the idea that nature in Dominica imbues things of Dominican origin with its qualities and its goodness.

There is too a sense in which the conflation of 'natural' and 'local' seems linked to the ideas that naturalness involves an expression of essential character, of one's nature. It is my conjecture that this conceptualization of 'natural' helps to explain the way people being interviewed about nature in Dominica would make reference to traditions not only of cuisine, but also of dress, dance, and music. These local traditions (and particularly Dominica's agricultural heritage) can be understood as being natural, in that they are seen as being natural *to Dominica*, an expression of Dominican-ness, of the nature of Dominica and the Dominican people.

In a sense then, if nature has been a hindrance to infrastructural development, it has at the same time fostered, for better or for worse, the development of qualities that are seen (by both Dominicans and by migrants to the country) as essential elements of the identity and character of Dominicans as a people, and by extension, of Dominica as a nation.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an indication of "the complexity of meaning" (Williams, 1976:187) associated with nature in Dominica. We have seen that although there appears to be a level of general agreement about what nature is, these fundamental ideas about nature are developed, extended and used in a variety of different ways. Through the use of a few selected collateral concepts, I have sought to indicate not only what nature means to

Dominicans, but also how nature in Dominica is part of a contextualized network of meanings.

From the beginning of my research into perceptions of nature in Dominica, I have sought to emphasize the ways in which nature is known and grasped through practice and embodied activity in day-to-day life. Fortuitously, it has become apparent that this approach is coherent and compatible with what Dominicans value in their relationships with nature: they assign considerable weight to practical knowledge and experience of nature and the natural world.

In this chapter I have shown how Dominicans' ideas about nature are linked to their concepts of religion, of culture and tradition, of society and family, and of development and progress. These linkages mean that when Dominicans talk of nature, what is under discussion, or at stake, may be significantly more than material objects such as trees, rivers and mountains. Indeed, nature in Dominica is thought of as one of the island's distinguishing characteristics, and as a vital element of the island's essential character. Nature is a key aspect of Dominicans' understandings of and relationships to Dominica as a meaningful place.

8 Conservation Natures

[Dominica's former] Minister of Tourism Charles Savarin has said that his perception is that Dominica 'is not a national park in which we live.'

(Pattullo, 2005:157)

I began my exploration of contemporary relationships to nature in Dominica by examining one realm of practice that is becoming increasingly influential on Dominicans' perceptions and ideas about nature, that is: nature tourism. In this penultimate chapter I shall look at another prominent area of practice and discourse, that relating to conservation. I begin by looking at the work of Dominica's leading conservation agency, the government's Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division (FWPD). In a brief review of the legal statutes governing the Division's operations I show how these texts allow us to trace changing ideas about nature and the project of nature conservation in Dominica. They also give us an idea of some of the ways in which Dominicans have been accustomed to engaging with the natural world. In the present day, conservation in Dominica as undertaken by the FWPD involves more than environmental policy and doctrine. In this chapter, I draw attention to how conservation, like tourism, incorporates active embodied practice that involves sensuous and affective relationships with the natural world. As such, the conservation work of the FWPD in Dominica is not merely a matter of promoting an abstract environmental ideal; it is also a prime example of the kind of practical nature knowledge that, as we saw in the preceding chapter, Dominicans value highly.

Nevertheless, several Dominicans I spoke to expressed reservations, even scepticism, about what they see as the prevailing principles of conservation and environmentalism. One of the most public, protracted and passionate exhibitions of this scepticism was the lengthy debate about commercial whaling that took place in Dominica in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The terms in which this debate was presented in the local press show how

conservation can be about much more than nature *per se*. I suggest that it may also be indicative of a degree of resistance to the idea that nature is a global resource and should be managed as such. This should not be understood to mean that Dominicans are inherently unresponsive to the idea of nature conservation. Rather they are likely to be responsive to, and even embrace, initiatives that resonate with their perceptions and feeling about 'their' nature and their relationships thereto.

8.1 'Integrity of natural resources conservation': the Forestry Division

The antecedent of Dominica's Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division was the Forestry Service, which was established in the late 1940s by J.A.N. Burra, a Scottish colonial officer who was assigned to Dominica as part of a colonial welfare and development programme (*Founder of Dominica's Forestry Service dies*, 2001). Burra formulated a policy for the protection and management of Dominica's forests, and selected and trained Dominicans to serve as forest rangers and forest officers in the fledgling Service.

In a slender report, dated 1950 and apparently prepared as an evaluation of land and forestry management in Dominica, it was noted that a formal forest policy had been adopted by the legislature in 1945 (Robertson, 1950). The Forest Department had begun work on the "reservation of the high level forests of the central massif, together with that of the upper catchment area of the Roseau River" (Robertson, 1950:1). As part of the protection of the forests, the Department had imposed restrictions on practices such as timbering, firewood harvesting, charcoal making and the clearing of land for farming. According to the report, some consideration was being given to the protection and management of forests of valuable timber for commercial production purposes, but the chief concern appears to have been with what was referred to as forestry that was "protective" (Robertson, 1950:1), rather than productive or profitable.

Forest protection aims were made explicit and enshrined in law via the Forests Act of 1959, “an Act to make provision for the conservation and control of forests”. In the Act, forests were to be protected in order to preserve the benefits they afforded human beings—that is, the interest was in what might now be described as the ‘ecosystem services’ that forests provide. Forests were seen to afford protection against storms, winds, rockfall, floods, landslides, and soil erosion; they were an important line of defence for agricultural lands, roads, bridges, airstrips, and other infrastructure. They were perceived as being crucial for the maintenance of safe and sufficient water supplies and they contributed to the general preservation of health.

The Forests Act formalized the designation of forest reserves and the restrictions placed on the activities that might take place therein. In 1972, Forest Rules were established to accompany the Act. These Rules forbade certain types of forest practices and restricted others so that they could not be carried out without a licence. Licences could be granted for the extraction of certain types of forest produce, including timber, firewood, bamboo, palm roots, palm leaves and grass, but not mahot, lianes, tan bark or orchids. Some allowance might also be made for clearing and cultivation within the forests. The Rules included a list specifying the crops that were permitted to be cultivated on forest lands. They also made an attempt to enlist the participation of the public in the conservation effort, by requiring individuals who were granted a licence for clearing and cultivation to engage in forest stewardship: they could only clear trees as specified by the Forest Department, had to retain trees as specified, had to farm in such a way as not to interfere with the growth of trees, and were responsible for tending and protecting the young trees in and around the licensed area.

Reading the Forests Act and accompanying Rules, the provisions outlining what was permitted and what was proscribed in Dominica’s forest reserves and protected forests, provides an insight into the sorts of nature practices that were prevalent at the time, and the sorts of uses that were made of forest lands and resources. It is likely that the drafters of the legislation received advice and guidance from the officers of the Department that would be

responsible for the Act's implementation. As such, the Act and Rules bear witness to forest officers' knowledge of local forest practices, and to their familiarity with local agricultural practices. In order to enforce these regulations, forest officers would have had to spend considerable amounts of time in the forests, coming to know it through routine daily practice. They would have needed to be able to identify and distinguish between various types of forest produce. The law permitted (although on a restricted level) some activities—the cultivation of bananas and dasheen, for examples—and prohibited others—the cultivation of citrus or cocoa, perhaps (these latter examples are speculative, because prohibited crops were not specified by name in the Rules). Familiarity with agricultural plants would have been necessary in order for forest officers to assess whether cultivation was being carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Act and any associated permits or licences. Furthermore, the selective permit provisions are unlikely to have been arbitrary; it is probable that they were based on the Forestry Department's consideration of various factors, such as the likely impacts the activities would have had on the forest resources, and perhaps the prevalence and importance of particular agricultural practices. It is likely that the Forest Rules in particular, in their specificity, are a product of the officers' own forest practices, their routine patrols of the forests, their attention to and observation of activities therein, and their assessments of the conditions and impacts arising from said activities.

In 1976 the remit of the Forestry Department was widened to include the "protection, conservation and management of wild mammals, freshwater fishes, amphibians, crustaceans and reptiles" (Forestry and Wildlife Act, 1976). Under the provisions of the new Forestry and Wildlife Act, the Division—now renamed the Division of Forestry and Wildlife—was charged with "promot[ing] forest and wildlife conservation and management in Dominica" (Forestry and Wildlife Act:§6). The new Act repealed several old wildlife protection laws dating from the early 20th century, and served as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, the Forests Act. The framing of the new conservation law was indicative of new ways of thinking about nature. This is apparent, for example, in the differences in the language used

to describe the Act's purpose. Reference is made to the management of wildlife, rather than just protection (as in, for example, the Wild Birds Protection Ordinance of 1959). The forests are to be managed, not controlled, as was the case in the Forests Act. And there is a call to promote, rather than just 'make provision for', conservation.

Another new element in the 1976 Forestry and Wildlife Act was the provision made for the scientific monitoring and management of nature. Conservation officers were given the authority to "conduct scientific surveys and studies on wildlife and forestry problems" (Forestry and Wildlife Act:§8b) and to "establish, administer and develop geological gardens, aquariums, laboratories of natural science" (Forestry and Wildlife Act:§8c). The Act was the first piece of Dominican conservation legislation in which all species listed therein were referred to by their scientific names. By the 1970s, science and scientific knowledge had come to be seen as important elements of conservation-based relationships to nature in Dominica.

Another piece of legislation that governs the work of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division is the National Parks and Protected Areas Act. Passed in 1975, this Act served to establish Dominica's first national park. It also enshrined the principle of national ownership of parks and protected areas, with its declaration that

all lands in the park and all lands set apart as protected areas ... are hereby vested in the State and dedicated to the people of Dominica for their benefit, education and enjoyment" (National Parks and Protected Areas Act:§3(1)).

The inclusion of references to education and enjoyment further expanded the range of human relationships to nature that were acknowledged and protected under Dominican law. Additionally, the National Parks and Protected Areas Act differed from previous conservation legislation in that it was framed in terms of facilitating, rather than restricting, Dominicans' access to and experience of nature and natural areas. This law also officially recognized nature in Dominica as an object of aesthetic and recreational

practice, with allowance made for lands to be set aside as parks or protected areas for the purposes (among others) of “(a) preserving the natural beauty of such areas, including flora and fauna thereof; [and] (b) creating a recreational area” (National Parks and Protected Areas Act:§5). This notion of nature as an aesthetic and recreational space was reinforced by the National Parks Regulations of 2003, which focused primarily on the preservation and management of parks and protected areas as eco-tourism sites.

The current mission of the Dominica Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division is articulated on their website, which features prominently a pledge to “do everything within our technical and professional capabilities to ensure that Dominica’s natural environment is protected for all generations to come”. The Division also boasts of the “integrity of natural resource conservation on Dominica” and declares a commitment to ensuring the “sustainable utilization of the island’s forests, wildlife and national park resources” (all Dominica Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, n.d.). As of 2011 the FWPD’s functions listed on their website included forest administration, forest management, environmental education, environmental monitoring and research, forest and wildlife protection, and the management and maintenance of national parks and ecotourism sites (Dominica Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division, n.d.).

8.2 Conservation in practice

Given my interest in active embodied relationships with nature, I wanted to learn about the sorts of engagements with the natural world that are part of the FWPD’s day-to-day work of conservation in Dominica. To this end, I was graciously permitted by the FWPD to accompany some of their officers on trips to the field. Below, I present accounts of two such trips, one to a site in the south of Dominica, and the other to a location in the west. Both trips were previously referred to in chapter 6. However, in the accounts discussed below, my focus is less on particular bodily practices, and more on the sorts

of practical knowledge demonstrated and communicated by the people I was observing. Therefore I place less emphasis on specific embodied actions and more on how the forest officers' interactions with each other contextualized and called attention to features of their interaction with the natural world (as well as to features of the natural world itself). In this regard, it was particularly illuminating to accompany and observe an experience Forestry officer and a relative novice on a field trip and to compare this with a later field trip undertaken by two veteran officers together.

8.2.1 Forest conservation

The first outing was made for the purpose of monitoring a plot of mahogany trees in the hillside forests above the village of Pichelin, in southern Dominica. It was explained to me that several years previously, someone had been caught removing trees from the forest illegally. A mahogany plot had been planted to replace the trees that had been felled; the offender was made to bear the cost of this reforestation. Staff from the FWPD routinely visit the site to assess the state of the trees and to make sure that no illegal timber harvesting is taking place (mahogany being a high-value wood). Such visits were also an occasion for appraisal of the general condition of the forest.

On this particular trip, I accompanied two officers from the FWPD. Louis¹⁴, the elder, had many years of experience, while Owen was a relative newcomer, having worked with the Division for "a couple of years". Upon my introduction to Louis and Owen at the Division's offices, they jokingly remarked that they had been waiting to see whether I looked like the kind of person who could handle the trek that we were about to make, or whether I was "one of those bourgeois girls with the fancy fingernails". If I had been that type of girl, I was told, they would have found an excuse to leave me behind. Thankfully, I (and my fingernails) passed muster and we set off. I travelled with a new sensitivity to some of the ways in which nature work in Dominica is gendered.

¹⁴ All FWPD officers mentioned in this chapter are referred to by pseudonyms.

On the outskirts of Pichelin, at the foot of the hill we were about to climb, Louis and Owen changed their clothes to more appropriate wear, pulling on their rubber boots and pulling out their cutlasses. While they did so a villager came out onto her verandah. She was obviously familiar with Louis, and called a friendly greeting. He responded and asked her how things had been in the area since his last visit. She replied that things were fine, except that an agouti had been troubling the crops in her garden. "Can I take him?" she asked, "or it's too late?" Louis reminded her jovially that the hunting season had just closed, and she good-naturedly agreed that she would have to leave the agouti alone, but that she would be very grateful if they could perhaps arrange for somebody to come to trap it and get it away from her place. This exchange, though brief, was an example of conservation at work, a demonstration of how conservation includes seemingly mundane elements of social practice and interaction.

We crossed a small stream—where Louis filled his water bottle and advised me that next time I was going out into the forest I should have a bottle of water with me, as it was hot and sweaty work—and began our upward climb. Louis took note of some signs of human activity on the lower slopes: a small garden had been made, beds laid out and quite newly planted, the path had been cleared and seemed quite well-travelled. Further along it seemed that someone had been cultivating a stand of bananas. These were not cause for immediate concern, but were remarked upon as something to keep an eye on during future visits; perhaps gentle enquiries could be made to find out whose garden it was or whether anyone had been seen routinely making their way to or from the forest.

A little further up the slope, Louis noticed a bird soaring above; he pointed it out to his colleague, and invited him to tell me what it was. Owen misidentified the bird as an osprey and Louis suggested that he look again, observing the pattern of flight and thinking about our location. Owen got it right the second time: the bird was a chicken hawk. Louis informed me that the chicken hawk is locally known as the *malfini*, so called, Louis chuckled, because if you are keeping chickens and the hawk comes around, your

poultry is bound to come to a bad end. In this exchange were the traces of a pattern that I noticed as our trip continued. When the two foresters told me about flora or fauna that we encountered, Louis would give the specimen its local or *kwéyòl* name, whereas Owen would give its standard English name and was also at some pains to demonstrate his knowledge of the appropriate scientific nomenclature. As with tourism, there were two bodies of nature knowledge operating in tandem, and it seemed that each officer had his own preference for which to employ.

The typical interaction between the two foresters during our trip through the forest was that the elder would ask the younger a question designed to test his knowledge and the younger would reply to the best of his ability. When Owen made a mistake or answered incorrectly Louis would guide him in the right direction. This guidance was often quite literal, because many of Louis' tests related to the process of wayfinding in the forest.

He would stop and ask, for instance, whether Owen remembered passing this way before, what forest features he would use as landmarks to help him recognize the spot if he passed it again, or if he could name the large tree there on our right. At a point where the path split into two, he quizzed Owen about how to tell which fork was the right one to take. At places where there was no evident path and one had to be made, he would leave it to Owen to take the lead, to select and clear the route (although on occasion when he felt that Owen's choice was wrong, he would go one way and let Owen go another; in such cases Louis usually ended up ahead). He advised that, to keep ourselves going in the right direction, it was helpful to note our position relative to the sun, and suggested that Owen should leave traces to help mark the path. The cutlass came in handy for leaving such traces, for example, by cutting a few branches from a tree, or bending a tree limb in a particular way, or making a nick in the bark. The cutlass was also used to cut footholds in the muddy slopes and was essential for clearing a path through the woods. On several occasions Louis advised Owen to be more judicious in the use of his cutlass, particularly when cutting bamboo, which can produce

sharp splinters that can injure one's eyes. Louis also continually offered me guidance and advice, as described in chapter 6, on how to walk in the forest.

Eventually we reached a plateau and the hike became less strenuous, allowing us to catch our breaths. This part of the forest was shadier and cooler, the trees were noticeably (even to my untrained eye) taller, and the undergrowth less dense. At this point the forest looked the same to me in all directions, but Louis and Owen were, after some consultation, able to identify the particular copse of mahogany trees they were looking for. There was some initial concern when they noticed, from a distance, that a few of the trees had fallen, but closer inspection revealed that this had been a result of natural causes. It seemed that one tree had fallen and in so doing had caused damage to a few of the other trees around it. Louis was also able to surmise, from the condition of the trees and of the forest floor around them, that they had fallen sometime ago. Otherwise the planted mahogany was doing well.

Having thus ascertained that the trees were fine, we began our return journey, which was quicker than the ascent by virtue of its being all downhill—although as Louis pointed out, walking downhill can actually be more difficult than going up, with a higher risk of slipping and falling—and because the path had already been cleared. When we reached the stream, Louis asked Owen if he could remember where we had crossed; the spot Owen chose was not quite right, but Louis supposed it would do. We splashed our faces with water, and returned to the Division's offices by car. In all, the trip up into the forests and back had taken a little more than two hours.



Figure 15: In the forest above Pichelin (photos by author)

8.2.2 Monitoring lakes

On my second field trip, I accompanied two veteran Forest Officers, Louis and Edwin. The objective of the trip was to monitor water levels at the Matthieu Lake. Known popularly as the Miracle Lake, the Matthieu Lake

formed in 1989 as a result of a landslide which created an unusually persistent natural dam across the Matthieu River (DeGraff et al., 2010). After the lake's formation the FWPD routinely monitored water levels and other conditions behind the dam¹⁵. Of the two foresters visiting the lake on this particular day, Edwin had been regularly involved in the lake monitoring and the preparation of the resulting reports, while Louis had not been to the lake for some time.

Louis parked the vehicle along the road in the hills above St. Joseph; we would be going the rest of the way on foot. As Louis and Edwin pulled on their rubber boots, loud birdcalls were heard. Both foresters immediately recognized the calls of the Jaco parrot, several of which were flying overhead at the time. They paused to observe the direction of their flight, and as we set off on our walk, they chatted about the FWPD parrot research and conservation programme, in particular the monitoring work carried out by the Division's Parrot Team.

I learned that the Sisserou parrot has a reputation as a bird with secretive nesting habits. Nests are typically located in cavities high up in mature trees deep in the rainforest; they do not lend themselves to easy observation. Part of the Parrot Team's work involves seeking out Sisserou nests and monitoring the behaviour and condition of the birds occupying them. Louis, who is on the Parrot Team, was telling Edwin about a number of likely nest sites in the Morne Diablotin National Park. Their shared familiarity with Dominica's natural environment was evidenced by the way Edwin was able to recall and recognize particular places in the Park based just on Louis' description of a particular tree or some other natural feature. They explained to me that the Parrot Team knows the parrot habitat exceptionally well because they have spent many hours observing birds and nests. To support this point, Louis related to me a recent highlight in the Team's work.

¹⁵ Today, the Miracle Lake is no more. In July 2011, after a period of heavy rainfall, the Lake burst its dam, causing sudden and severe flooding in the valley below. There was extensive damage to property and infrastructure, but no reported loss of life.

In 2008, after hours of waiting during a scheduled monitoring trip, the Team observed a young Sisserou parrot fledging from the nest. Soon after the bird had successfully fledged, they realized that there was another left behind. This was an astounding finding, because all field data to date had suggested that Sisserou pairs produced only one fledgling at a time. Louis' enthusiasm and the pleasure he obtained from the experience were apparent in his descriptions of the teams repeated visits to the forests to observe the nest, the parents and the first fledgling. They returned to the site daily until the second chick successfully fledged (a happening they unfortunately did not get to observe first hand). An account of the double fledging, written by another member of the Parrot Team (Durand, 20—), conveys the Team's emotional engagement with the Sisserou pair and their offspring, as well as indicating the close minute-by-minute attention involved in their observations.

Louis and other members of the Parrot Team sometimes also work as tour-guides, particularly for tourists interested in birding. Tourists who visit Morne Diablotin often hope for a Sisserou sighting, but even in their tour guide capacity, the Team is protective of the parrots. I learned from an earlier conversation between two Team members that their response to a request for a parrot-viewing trip is based on their "feeling" about the birder in question, their "gut instinct" about the birder's seriousness and the level of respect they would show the parrots. When they consent to guide visitors to the parrots' habitat, they will often take an intentionally circuitous and confusing route, to give the impression that the parrots are more remote than they actually are, and to limit the visitors' ability to be able to find the way back to the nest site on their own. Another trick Louis confided was that of "talking all the while", keeping up a constant patter to deflect attention from the route to the nest site. These strategies and instinctive responses are, for members of the Parrot Team, important elements of their conservation practice. As with nature tourism, these particulars are the kind that are likely to be neglected by a perspective that treats conservation solely as an institutional discourse rather than as a practice carried out on the personal, embodied level.

At the start of the trail that would take us down to the Matthieu Lake, we greeted the occupant of the small house nearby and then we began our descent. Edwin was initially solicitous about my ability to negotiate the trail, but Louis reassured him that I would be able to keep up. The walk here was more difficult than the one from Pichelin. The journey to the lake involved negotiating a slippery downhill path, climbing over fallen tree trunks, hopping over hollows, and easing along the edges of ridges where parts of the slope had fallen away, occasionally crouching low or hanging onto tree limbs in order to keep my balance. As we made our way, Edwin explained to Louis that some trees had fallen and some land had slipped since Louis' last visit to the Lake, so that we were taking a different path from the one he would remember.

Louis and Edwin were in continual conversation during the trip down to the lake. They paused here to take note of the mushrooms growing on a log, there to chat briefly about how to distinguish between what seemed to my untrained eye to be two identical trees with dark-coloured bark, and everywhere kept up a running dialogue about the surrounding vegetation, including discussion of other places on the island where interesting dendrological observations could be made. At one point we saw a wild begonia blooming on the side of the path; they both remarked on its beauty and Louis made us stop and put our faces close to the flower, to inhale its fragrance. When Edwin remarked that he had not know that wild begonias were so richly scented, Louis explained that he had recently discovered that some of them were, and pointed out a few of the identifying characteristics of this particular variety. Further down the slope, which had become muddier and more slippery, they observed a disturbance to the undergrowth, where plants and small trees had been bent and flattened. Someone or something had been through the area quite recently. We continued to proceed with caution, and soon came upon tracks which confirmed their suspicions: wild pigs. As we drew near to the lake, Edwin observed that the buttress roots of one of the large trees nearby had changed since his last visit: they had for some time been gradually growing closer together and had now met each other to form a little enclosure "like a bathtub". He wanted a photo of the

'bathtub tree' but we would take it on the way back up, once their work was complete.

At the lake itself (and I was told that what I was seeing was just a small portion of the lake; the larger part was just around the bend and barely visible through the trees), they spent some time discussing the changes that had taken place since Louis' last visit, in particular the drastic fall in water levels. The land that we were standing on had been under water last time Louis had been there, and the clumps of trees out in the lake had been almost completely submerged. Edwin pointed out to me an abandoned garden close to what was now the lake's shore, and also explained that before the landslide tree-stumps in the lake had been part of the forest. The newly formed lake had covered them with water and caused them to rot away. When water levels had been at their highest the depth markers could be reached only by swimming, but today they were far more accessible. A matter of some concern to Edwin and Louis was that several of the trees had been tagged with little strips of plastic, something that would require further investigation. They wondered if perhaps somebody had been surveying the site for possible tourism use.

In addition to measuring the water levels—which Edwin noted were among the lowest recorded since the lake had formed—Louis and Edwin took note of the general conditions at the site, including the presence or traces of wildlife. I was pleased to be able to contribute to this exercise by pointing out a bird perched on a tree in the middle of the lake; Edwin and Louis consulted over what species it was, came to an agreement and duly recorded the sighting in the field notebook. Lake monitoring complete, we began the return journey to the road, stopping only briefly to take a photo of the bathtub tree. The return trip seemed to me much more strenuous and less conversational than the descent had been; when we finally came out of the woods Edwin told me cheerfully that he had intentionally set a quick pace to test my mettle. I had passed the test: "You did well," he assured me. On this trip, we had spent about three hours in the forest.

Compared to the conversation during my previous outing with the FWPD, which had taken place a week earlier, the character of the exchanges between the two experienced officers was distinctly different. On the earlier trip, communication had been largely instructive, as Louis sought to school Owen on how to see, know and engage with the forests. It was because of the quality of their interaction that I was able to identify some of the skills and abilities that they exercised in the course of their work.



Figure 16: Trip to the Matthieu Lake (photos by author)

In offering instruction to Owen, Louis made key elements of his practical knowledge of nature explicit. I was able to gain an understanding of the sorts of knowledge, skills and perceptual abilities that he thought it was necessary to have in order to be a competent forester. On the outing with Louis and Edwin these skills and abilities would have been put into practice as well, but Louis and Edwin's shared competence meant that these practices could go largely unremarked. While Louis' remarks to Owen had been mainly for the purpose of transmitting knowledge, Louis' and Edwin's comments to each other had the tenor of a reciprocal sharing of information, via which a common adeptness and familiarity with the natural world was mutually affirmed and reinforced. Also, because their shared competence meant that they didn't have to talk about this practical knowledge, they were able to talk about other elements of their experience in nature. Based on the events and features that caught their attention and became topics of conversation, it was possible to gain a sense of their personal interest in and enjoyment of the natural world. The anecdote of the begonia provides one of the clearest examples of how their engagement with nature was not merely functional and task-oriented, but also pleasurable, incorporating sensuous aesthetic experience.

It would be impossible by my descriptions of these outings with foresters in Dominica to capture and convey the greater part of the experience of the forest: the heat, the humidity, the smell of the soil and of damp undergrowth, the quality of the light filtering through the trees, the layer of grime that settled on my skin, and the overall physicality of the experience, which is an integral aspect of a forester's daily work. Nevertheless, I hope to have conveyed some idea of the way this work involves close familiarity and intimate engagement with the natural world. Conservation in Dominica involves more than just abstract ideas or philosophies about nature, or an idea of nature as a scientifically researchable environment that is best known objectively, through the intellect (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). It is also an actively social, embodied, sensuous and aesthetic realm of practice.

As one would expect, experienced foresters in Dominica do not just know about the forests, they know the forests, a knowledge grounded in their everyday embodied experience of the natural world. However there is some concern that this way of knowing is in decline, as younger foresters like Owen are thought to inadequately value this kind of knowledge and are not eager to acquire it. Giles, one of the experienced foresters with whom I went out, was critical of what he saw to be the younger generation's over-reliance on book knowledge and computers. Giles's training had involved practical training in forest wayfinding, a task made even more difficult by Dominica's terrain, in which a journey to a destination that seems a short distance away is likely to be complicated by the intervention of ridges, ravines and rivers. In addition to adventuring in the forests, Giles had spent countless hours physically maintaining the forest line, keeping protected areas clearly delimited from adjacent private lands. Another important aspect of his job was the forest patrol, making sure that people are not taking timber or wildlife illegally. These patrols require a familiarity with the places in the forests and rivers where crayfish or crab or agouti are usually abundant, as well as an acquaintance with hunters' habits and practices. It is also important to be able to communicate the conservation message to the hunter; to enlist them to the cause, rather than alienate them, even if it means being lenient with some of the less egregious offenders. In Giles's opinion his practical work has provided him with vital skills that young recruits to the service seem uninterested in cultivating. Giles made it clear that academic knowledge and technology were valuable and useful in their own way: geographical information systems, for example, are a much appreciated innovation. However, he is concerned that young recruits to the Division seem uninterested in cultivating the sort of practical expertise that is so vital to a forester's work. Rather than getting out to actually know the forest, he said, "they want to sit inside and do all their work on computers."

Giles's sentiments in this regard are of a kind with the ideas, discussed in chapter 7, that practical knowledge of nature is in decline and that this is due in part to modernization and technology. These opinions are also consonant with criticisms expressed by people working in tourism and agriculture that

technocrats lack the practical experience that should be an essential aspect of their work. Academic knowledge is seen as an inadequate substitute. Tourism operators are scornful of tourism officials who don't hike the trails, climb the mountains, see the sites, visit the villages and explore the island and what it has to offer. Farmers complain about extension officers who rarely visit the farms, don't farm themselves, and dispense advice derived from the books they read in college or from training courses in countries whose conditions are vastly different to Dominica's. However, no one I spoke to had anything unfavourable or disparaging to say about the staff of the FWPD. Whenever the Division was mentioned, it was always with approbation. It seems likely that the respect and admiration accorded to the FWPD is, in substantial part, a result of the fact that officers are seen to have exceptional practical knowledge, acquired through routine active engagement with the natural world they seek to protect.

8.3 A preoccupation with protection?

Despite the general goodwill towards Dominica's leading conservation agency, several Dominicans I spoke to expressed scepticism about what they perceived to be the prevailing principles of environmentalism. It should be noted that sceptics did not appear to associate this perceived conservationist agenda with the FWPD, but with what they saw to be a vocal minority of people, often described by respondents as environmentalists or environmental activists.

I should also mention that my schema of interview questions did not include references to conservation or environmentalism; the issue was one raised by respondents themselves, most often in response to questions of whether nature was hampering Dominica's development. Here are some typical examples of this type of response:

Yes [nature] does [hold back development]. Because we have so many advocates on the island, so when you want to take a piece of the forest to build a house some

of them angry with you. ...You find people that quarrel even when they cut trees to put roads (James).

I think in terms of development [nature is] kind of holding it back, in terms of the mentality of the people. For example DIGICEL [a telecommunications company] wanted to cut roads to set up antennae etc., and there was a big uproar and a lot of resistance to that, but they continued, and now if you go there all the trees have grown back you would not know that trees had been cut. So people want to see the country remain in its natural state, and this can hinder development. ... People have been battling for the international airport for a long time, and the resistance to it and other changes has been holding back progress and development (Tony).

Maybe [nature] holds us back in that in trying to keep it untouched unspoiled prevents increase in infrastructure ... If people were not so nature conscious the island would have developed a lot (Jalen).

Other respondents developed this idea further:

The majority of people here are overzealous about protecting things. My understanding is that there should be a balance between the demands of development and the need for conservation. Development demands that you destroy some of nature and our approach to conservation should be to what extent you destroy, not a total preoccupation with protection. I think we've overdone it and we don't have anything to show for it as such except the trees... We're begging for development but at the same time you have people saying they don't want people to touch the land, don't touch this, don't touch anything (Frederick).

By virtue of the media, the types of media that we have, television, it has brought on, and not only in Dominica, throughout the world, it has brought on an environmental crave, so to speak, where people begin to try to have more value for the environment, but then in my view a lot of the values associated with it are negative energies, where people don't look at the component resources or biodiversity and [at how] at the end of the day, they are still components that can be utilized by us, whether it is for food security, for economic activity and so forth. What we have to do is to strive to establish those balances in terms of use, and

not just to look at them as components that should be 100% under protection. So we have a protection crave that has taken over in terms of the environmental protection lobby and framework that I think is wrong (Andrew Magloire).

In the views of these respondents—some of whom characterized themselves as nature enthusiasts—and others who expressed similar opinions, development in Dominica is being inhibited not by nature itself, but by a certain idea of nature as something to be conserved, to be preserved in an untouched condition. Examples were given of projects—roads, hotels, airports, telecommunications towers, housing areas, quarries—that had faced environmentalist opposition and in some case were abandoned as a result. Projects that were deemed harmful to nature and that also faced opposition on the grounds of other direct negative impacts, such as adverse effects on people's health, quality of life, or land/sea use tended to be spoken of somewhat differently. These were held up as examples of Dominicans' protective attitudes towards nature, as well as of their independent spirit. This, I speculate, is because the grounds for objection to the latter type of projects were compatible with the prevalent Dominican ethos that nature is there for humankind's benefit; projects that interfere with the benefits being derived from nature are seen as more worthy of resistance than projects that 'just' affect nature.

Respondents who expressed the opinion that the preoccupation with protection was hampering development in Dominica seemed ill at ease with the idea that development should be obstructed for the sake of nature. This unease is perhaps understandable, given that environmentalism seems to be perceived as a relatively new way (and as we have seen in one of the earlier quotes, foreign) way of thinking about nature. As one respondent opined:

It's not until very recently that people would sacrifice development for nature. I mean, growing up in Dominica, nature was taken for granted so you didn't think twice of diverting a stream to do whatever... People didn't think about the consequences in terms of the negative effect it would have on the natural environment. So [the idea that] persons actually

deliberately underdeveloped so that they could preserve nature, it's not until very recently that people began to think in those terms (Denis).

Another expressed the view that even thinking in those terms is misguided:

I don't think we're at the point of even sacrificing nature for development ... I wouldn't say we're at the point where we need to make this great sacrifice to decide which way we are going (Eric).

One of the inferences that might be made here is that the underlying belief is that there is so much nature in Dominica and so little development, relatively speaking, that to lose some of the former in order to gain the latter is, in the balance of things, hardly a sacrifice. After all, 60 %¹⁶ of Dominica's land area is covered by forest (EarthTrends, 2003; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2011). Furthermore, several respondents were of the view that with the abandonment of agriculture the forest is expanding and taking over abandoned farms, so that without proper management "Dominica would turn back to complete forest" (Wilson). In this context, it might be difficult to convince people that there is a genuine need for conservation projects that would involve "maybe 500,000 trees [planted] on the coastal road" (Wayne) or a million trees planted across the island.

This latter tree planting project was initiated by a Dominican environmental activist, but was discontinued for lack of funding after about 7,000 trees had been planted, mainly in the Carib Territory. The project involved the planting of

forest trees of two types, one was to encourage wildlife to return, so trees that bore fruits that the wildlife would eat, and the other was forest trees for harvesting in the future, so you had a retirement plan (Denise, 36, Roseau).

¹⁶ A few respondents put this figure much higher, estimating that around 80 % of Dominica was still forested and 'untouched'.

In a later conversation with Joe (during which my prior knowledge of the million seeder project was not mentioned) he talked about the reforestation exercise and his participation in it. But he made no mention of planting trees to encourage and support the return of wildlife. His emphasis was on the nature that would be there for people to use and benefit from, and he spoke only of planting

mahogany, coubari, high quality exotic woods ...
within 20 years a mahogany tree is worth \$1,000, so [for
every 100 trees] the Carib Reserve is \$100,000 richer.

I suggest that the reservations that people expressed about the desire of some for “the country to remain untouched” can in part be attributed to conflict between new environmentalist notions of nature as something that should not be disturbed by human activity and the instrumentalist idea (Jaffe, 2006), which I would venture is older and deeper-rooted, that nature is there to be used for the benefit of human beings. The latter attitude is discernable in the view of the Dominican who lamented a landowner’s decision, which the respondent attributed to indirect pressure from environmental advocates, to abandon plans to build a housing development on “a nice piece of green land” (James). The newer perspective, meanwhile, is exemplified by the respondent who described a friend’s decision to cut down 30 mango trees to build a house as heart-breaking and a “mortal sin” (Wayne). It is difficult to imagine how such divergent perspectives might be reconciled.

Some respondents raised the issue of conservation as part of their responses to questions about the significance of Dominica’s identity as the nature island. The respondent who, in chapter 7, opined that nature had been used to justify Dominica’s past underdevelopment was similarly sceptical about the nature island slogan. In his view the slogan, which gives an impression of a “place with a pristine natural environment” serves as “an excuse for not developing the island ... a lot of times when people mention it, that’s what I get from it” (Eric). Although most respondents spoke favourably of the nature island designation and considered it a fitting description of Dominica, a few expressed disquiet about what they saw as the associated implication

that the nature island should remain untouched. They were somewhat uncomfortable with how the label is coming to be applied in a newly prescriptive, rather than just a descriptive, way. This prescriptiveness can be seen in the opening paragraphs of a 2005 editorial in the Chronicle newspaper:

Dominica, the nature island of the Caribbean!
Dominica, the number one eco-tourist destination in the world!
Dominica, pristine natural beauty! Dominica, the first whole country to be Green Globe 21 benchmarked!

Truly, we have loads of natural wonders but do we manage them properly? (*Nature Isle, not Naughty Isle*, The Chronicle, 2005)

In discussing conservation and environmental protection with reference to the nature island label, respondents are explicitly or implicitly considering Dominica's representation as a tourist destination, and the ideas and ideals of nature that are involved in this representation. Some respondents opined that Dominicans demonstrate a lack of care for the environment that belied these ideals. Others were of the view that the development of the nature tourism sector and the cultivation of the nature island identity had encouraged the adoption of conservationist attitudes towards nature. It was felt that as tourism grew in economic importance, people began to see nature conservation as an eminently pragmatic, rather than merely idealistic, endeavour, because conservation would contribute to the sustainable use and profitability of Dominica's nature as a touristic resource. Such tourism-related and tourism-motivated conservation is not necessarily at odds with the principle that nature should be put to beneficial and productive use.

8.4 Tourism and Conservation

However, a more contentious connection between conservation and tourism in Dominica has been the opportunity it offers for international conservation organization and lobbyists to use Dominica's growing reliance on nature

tourism as tactical leverage in conservation-related arguments. For example, in the late 1990s and during the first decade of the 21st century, Dominica and several other Eastern Caribbean countries were embroiled in heated disputes over their votes at meetings of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). One of the tactics used to persuade Dominica to reconsider its pro-whaling stance was to attempt to compromise Dominica's tourism industry (Erdle, 2001). In Dominica, the perception of this strategy was that "they threatened that they would tell people not to come to Dominica because we support killing whales" (Trevor). Commentators in the local press represented these threats as economic blackmail by radical international environmental and animal protection NGOs who put the wellbeing of whales above that of human beings (Douglas, 2001; *Bishop gone, banana and soshal securitie going and Greenpeace muss to go*, The Chronicle, 2001; Jno Baptiste, 2007). It is likely that Dominica was seen to be more vulnerable to tourism boycott tactics than its Caribbean neighbours, because of its nature island reputation and the focus on attracting nature-loving tourists, who would likely be dissuaded from visiting by news of the country's support for whaling. In 2007, one paid advertisement in favour of the resumption of whaling alluded to Dominica's reputation as a nature tourist destination by using as its headline "No Genuine contradiction between 'Nature Island' and sustainable use" (The Chronicle, 2007). It is not clear the extent to which the threats to the tourism industry influenced Dominica's decision makers, but in 2008 the Prime Minister announced that Dominica would no longer be lending its support to commercial whaling; instead the country would abstain from voting at that years IWC meeting (Jno Baptiste, 2008). It is noteworthy that the nature island was, and remains to date, the only Caribbean country to thus revise its official position on commercial whaling.

To give the international conservation NGOs their due, they have not hesitated to recognize and reward Dominica for its new anti-whaling stance. Greenpeace USA (2009) produced a video titled *Dominica: the Whale-friendly island*, in which Dominica was called a "small island in the Caribbean that's big on saving whales" and in which the attractions of this "hidden paradise"

were described in language befitting a tourism brochure. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) now organizes an annual Floating Classrooms programme in Dominica (*Students take to the sea for whale lessons*, The Chronicle, 2009), delivering a 'Caribbean Marine Life Education' curriculum to primary school children, and has, on its website, lauded Dominica's anti-whaling position and represented the island as the ideal Caribbean destination for "conscientious and conservation-minded" tourists (Levenson, 2011).

8.5 Our nature, our island: conservation and sovereignty

Despite Dominica's restored standing in the eyes of international conservation organizations, there is evidence that not all Dominicans are entirely at ease with the influence exerted by what are seen as foreign conservationist ideas, as the following example shows.

In early 2010 I attended a small meeting organized by the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division; the featured speaker was a PhD student doing research on human-wildlife conflict in Dominica, particularly in relation to parrots (Douglas, 2011). There are two endemic species of parrot in Dominica, the iconic Sisserou (also known as the Imperial Amazon, *Amazona imperialis*) and the less celebrated Jaco (*Amazona araucica*, also referred to locally as the Red-neck parrot). The Sisserou has been formally designated, under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's classification scheme, as an endangered species (facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild), while the Jaco, which is more abundant, is listed as vulnerable (facing a high risk of extinction in the wild). Due to a sustained and successful conservation programme in Dominica, which has included public education and legislative protection of both species and their habitats, parrot populations have shown consistent growth since the 1980s (Birdlife International, 2011a; Birdlife International, 2011b). A consequence of this is that parrots can increasingly be found outside of their protected habitats (Birdlife International, 2011a). I learned from the presentation that the birds were

venturing onto nearby farms and purloining fruit from farmers' citrus orchards.

At the meeting, it was tentatively mooted that consideration could be given to relaxing the protections accorded to the Jaco. A Forestry Officer cautioned that such a move might be premature. He further warned that it could damage Dominica's reputation in the international arena, such that international conservation NGOs might once again threaten a tourism boycott of Dominica, on the grounds that the government shows disregard for the protection of endangered species. One of the farmers responded with considerable exasperation that Dominicans should not allow people from outside to influence their decisions in this fashion, and expressed frustration that tourism and tourists might take precedence over agriculture and local farmers, especially since, as he declared with some passion, "Agriculture is what Dominica is about!"

There are several ideas about nature that come into play in this situation. There is the contrast, and in this case the conflict, between wild nature—the parrots and the highland forests in which they live—and cultivated nature—the farmers and their citrus orchards. There is the difference between the scientific assessment—that the parrots numbers "remain very small", "its range is small" and that some habitat "areas of critical importance are not protected" (Birdlife International, 2011b)—and people's local perceptions—that the parrots are increasingly plentiful and are beginning to overflow their customary habitats and trespass on human domains. There is the identification of Dominica with a particular traditional use of nature—agriculture—and the consequent resistance to ascendant new modes of nature relations, such as those associated with tourism. In this case what I wish to highlight is the way in which debates about nature and the management thereof are connected to fundamental social and cultural issues, in particular those surrounding national sovereignty and self-determination.

Returning to the debate on whaling and the issue of Dominica's vote at the IWC, a review of ten years of back issues of the Chronicle newspaper, from

January 2000 to December 2009, revealed that the matter received extensive coverage in the local press. This coverage included reprints of international news reports (a substantial number of which, particularly in the first half of the decade, were thinly disguised press releases from pro-whaling interests), paid advertisements by organizations on both sides of the debate, locally written opinion pieces, letters to the editor, editorials and local news reports. In one striking instance, more than a quarter of the pages, including five full pages of paid advertisements, of the May 25, 2007 edition of the newspaper contained some reference to the issues of whaling.

Considering that the issue at hand was, ostensibly, the protection of whales, a surprising amount of the argumentation deployed in the local debate had little to do with whales, their conservation status, their species value, or the possibility of sustainable exploitation of marine resources. The issue, prior to Dominica's abstention from the IWC vote, was typically not portrayed as a choice of voting for or against the protection of whales. Rather, it was often represented, both implicitly and explicitly, as a choice between siding with international environmental groups and siding with Japan. In this context, an important element of the argument was that the environmentalists, despite having multi-million dollar anti-whaling budgets at their disposal, were doing nothing to offer Dominica economic assistance or incentives to support their campaign. Japan, on the other hand, had offered Dominica considerable economic and development assistance (Douglas, 2001a&b; Jno Baptiste, 2001; *Whaling Symposium...IWC policies denounced*, The Chronicle, 2003; Jno Baptiste, 2007). The government and IWC representatives of Dominica and other Eastern Caribbean countries were repeatedly accused of having accepted development aid and other incentives from the Japanese government in exchange for pro-whaling votes (see for examples *Japan accused of buying whaling votes*, 1999; *Bribery on whaling admitted by Japan*, 2001; *Japan hits out at 'polarised' whaling council*, 2006; *Caribbean under fire for pro-whaling stance*, 2010; *Whaling Commission meeting opens in a swirl of corruption claims*, 2010). Much attention has been given in the media to Japan's use of economic incentives to secure support for their position at the IWC, and I will not dwell further on that here. Instead, I wish to draw attention to how

many of the most heated rhetorical claims framed the issue in terms of Dominica's domestic affairs and national interests.

In 2001 the former Prime Minister of Dominica, Dame Eugenia Charles, declared on the radio that Greenpeace and organizations of that ilk could go to hell, roundly condemning them for their interference in Dominica's domestic affairs (*Bishop gone, banana and soshal securitie going and Greenpeace muss to go*, The Chronicle, 2001). This statement was echoed by Dominica's commissioner to the IWC in a 2002 interview with the BBC (*Buying votes from Dominica*, n.d.; *Pascal demands BBC apology*, The Chronicle, 2002). International anti-whaling activists were depicted as mounting an assault on Caribbean people's right to exploit their own resources (Douglas, 2001b; *Mr. Martin, the radicals and whaling*, The Chronicle, 2001). In one newspaper report, the Antigua and Barbuda ambassador to Japan was quoted as describing said activists as "the Europeans and by extension their diaspora in the US" (*Whaling Symposium...IWC policies denounced*, The Chronicle, 2003), implying that the situation was one of 'them vs. us'. In another article, Dominica's commissioner to the IWC was reported as saying that anti-whaling NGOs who criticized Dominica for receiving development assistance from Japan "would prefer to see Dominica remain in perpetual slavery" (Bique, 2004). Local anti-whaling activists were the subjects of vehement verbal attacks; they were denounced as the lap-dogs of international NGOs, condemned for bringing discredit to Dominica's name overseas, and accused of seeking to destabilize the government at home. They were characterized as dangerous radicals, described as traitors working "to [hurt] the country for an alien cause" (*Atherton Martin and friends blacken Dominica's name*, 2001), and likened to Vidkun Quisling and Marshal Pétain.

To a significant extent then, those in Dominica who supported Japan's call for the resumption of commercial whaling deemed it useful to frame the issue in terms of the right to sovereignty and national self-determination. The implication of such a framing was that conservationist NGOs were seeking to dictate to, even to bully, Dominica in ways that were not respectful of Dominica's rights, privileges and interests as a sovereign state and that

certain factions (recall the reference to “Europeans and their diaspora in the US”) were seeking to exert control over the world and its resources, while showing little regard for the concerns of smaller, less powerful and less-developed countries like Dominica (Smith, 2002).

The idea of the world and its resources is a feature of how international conservation organizations represent nature as a global endowment for which international, or perhaps transnational, management is required. The WWF, for instance, has described on its website a “passion for safeguarding the natural world”, a deep concern for “the planet’s wellbeing” (WWF UK, n.d.a) and the goal of addressing “the most serious environmental problems facing our planet” and “global threats to people and nature ... such as the unsustainable consumption of the world’s natural resources” (WWF UK, n.d.b).

Greenpeace states its vision thus:

Our vision is to transform the world by fundamentally changing the way people think about it. We want governments, industry and each and every person to stop viewing the Earth as an inexhaustible resource and start treating it as something precious that needs our protection and careful management. We all need a planet that is ecologically healthy and able to nurture life in all its diversity (Greenpeace UK, n.d.).

Greenpeace further goes on to call for “a radically new way of understanding and living in this world we call home” (Greenpeace UK, n.d.). In these statements, nature is represented as global and general, even somewhat placeless (Tuan, 1975; Relph, 1976).

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) prides itself on being the world’s “first global environmental organization” (IUCN, n.d.) and aims to “help[] the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environmental and development challenges” (IUCN, n.d.). In 1972, the then Director of the IUCN, Gerardo Budowski wrote of “the need to manage the earth on a universal basis” (p. 9). In order to advance conservationist causes,

it was necessary that “man [*sic*] feel himself [*sic*] first as an inhabitant of planet earth rather than defending other local and regional interests” (p.14). Budowski also advocated the concept of world heritage in which “the governments of the countries or other owners where these resources are found are only the present ephemeral depositories of such a ‘world-heritage trust’”(p. 10). This view was given international political endorsement in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972, which held that “parts of the ... natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole” (UNESCO, 1972) and “the deterioration or disappearance of any items of the ... natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world” (UNESCO, 1972). In the Convention countries are not referred to as individual owners of any part of the natural heritage; rather reference is made to “the country where the property to be protected is situated” (UNESCO, 1972).

Other scholars have discussed the production of this global environmental discourse and its role in a system of global environmental governance (Taylor and Buttel, 1992; Goldman, 1998; McAfee, 1999; Adger et al., 2001; Dove, 2003; Jasanoff, 2004; Banerjee, 2009; Luke, 2009; Clapp and Dauvergne, 2011). For my part I wish simply to suggest that it is questionable whether conservationist notions of a global nature—the property of all and yet the property of none, requiring collective management and protection for the benefit of the entire planet—are entirely harmonious with local ideas about nature in Dominica.

Throughout my interviews people repeatedly referred to natural features in Dominica using the possessive adjective ‘our’: “our rivers”, “our mountains”, “our forests”, “our fresh air”, “our parrots”. A forestry officer explained to me that the special status accorded to the endemic Sisserou parrot under Dominica’s wildlife protection laws means any Sisserou parrot anywhere in the world can be traced back to Dominica and “belongs to us”. I am not convinced that Dominicans would entirely embrace the idea that although Dominica happens to be the only place where Sisserou are found, the

Sisserou really belongs to all the nations of the world. Similarly, they might well resist the notion that the rainforests in Dominica are a constituent part of the world's natural resources, to be managed not necessarily for the advantage of Dominicans, but for the benefit of humankind in general.

These two particular examples are hypothetical but, as I have shown in this chapter, there is clear evidence that some Dominicans are not amenable to the perceived imposition of an ethic of global conservation that fails to recognize the peculiarities of local relationship and rights with regards to nature and the natural world. Considering again the issues of whaling, recent IFAW anti-whaling advertisements in Dominica appeal to this sense of the local. The full-page ad shown in Figure 17, for example, plays to concerns regarding national sovereignty by calling for Dominica to refrain from supporting "someone else's yen for whale killing". It appeals to Dominica's nature island identity not once, but twice. And while it does not go so far as to refer to "Dominica's whales" or "our whales", it makes liberal use of the word "our": "our Caribbean heritage and economy", "our country's image", "our sustainable tourism and whale-watching industries".

I do not think that Dominican scepticism about concepts of global nature as a basis for conservation arises solely from any overweening attachment to their national sovereignty or from the desire for ownership and control over the country's natural resources. It is hardly surprising, though, that such ownership and control, so recently achieved after centuries of being an island administered by an external government for external interests, is highly valued. Nor is the scepticism explainable by virtue of Dominicans being, as Ringel and Wylie (1979) might have suggested, craven and self-interested, willing to engage in conservation action only for their own benefit rather than for the general good of humankind.

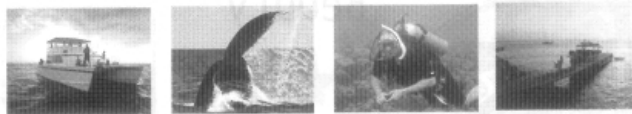
I suggest instead that something more affective and less mean-spirited is at work as a source of Dominicans' attachment to the idea of nature in Dominica as 'their' nature. Dominica's nature has been and continues to be the island's chief distinguishing characteristic. Even today it is seen as the

feature, or collection of features, that marks Dominica out as special, exceptional amongst its Caribbean neighbours. It has been an integral part of the Dominica story, at the heart of the histories and traditions of the island's people. It has been credited with shaping the people's character, their qualities of independence, insularity, self-sufficiency and resilience. It continues to be a prominent part of people's daily lives and experiences. Dominica's nature seems to be a core aspect of Dominica's placeness and identity, and one that, I think, Dominicans would be loath to have subsumed into the generality of humanity's global heritage or to offer up for collective global management and governance.

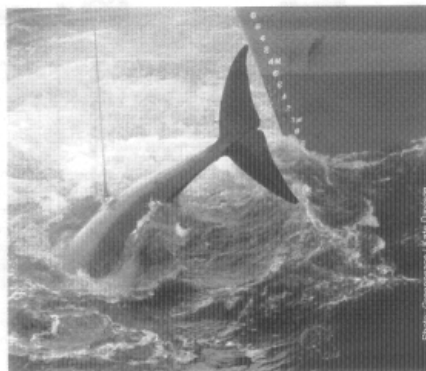
PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Whales are part of our Caribbean heritage and economy

Thousands of tourists visit Dominica each year to see these magnificent mammals – re-enforcing our country's image as the "nature island" of the Caribbean and generating income and employment for our people.



Despite this, Japan continues to slaughter whales – and to lure Caribbean nations to support this cruel hunt.



We need to continue to support our sustainable tourism and whale watching industries, and NOT someone else's yen for whale killing. Let's protect Dominica's reputation as a "nature island" and stand up for what is right.

Support whale watching, NOT whale killing.

This ad was produced by IFAW – to learn how you can help protect whales, visit www.ifaw.org/whales

Figure 17: International Fund for Animal Welfare whale conservation ad (Chronicle newspaper, Roseau, Dominica, May 14, 2010, p.17)

8.6 Local Conservation

This does not mean, however, that Dominicans are opposed to the idea of conservation *per se*, or that they lack a conservation ethic. In interviews many respondents emphasized and explained the importance of protecting and conserving “our forests”, “our rivers” and “our wildlife”. In this section, I shall present two examples of local eco-friendly and conservation initiatives. I believe that the success of the strategies described here derives substantially from the ways in which they are framed and perceived as being firmly grounded in the Dominican context.

One instance of Dominicans’ acceptance of eco-friendly principles can be found in the growing endorsement and adoption of organic farming precepts and methods. One of the earliest advocates of organic agriculture in Dominica was Mr. Andrew Royer, who began farming without the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers in the 1960s, on his farm Anronat in the village of Giraudel (*Andrew Royer...overcoming the odds*, The Chronicle, 2003). By the time of his death in 2004 Royer was acclaimed as a pioneer of organic agriculture and environmental sustainability (*Andrew Royer: Death of a pioneer*, The Chronicle, 2004), but at the start of his endeavour, a close associate told me, he was the subject of derision for his unconventional farming techniques (interview with Helen; see also Pattullo and Jno Baptiste, 1998). In spite of this mockery and his lack of formal training in organic farming, Royer persisted in the firm belief that chemical-free agriculture was better for the land, the crops, and the health of those producing and consuming the food grown. These days, he is credited in Giraudel for motivating farmers to make the shift towards less chemical-intensive ways of farming, but his influence extends beyond his home village. His obituary in the Chronicle newspaper outlined some of his accomplishments:

Andrew’s other lifetime achievements include the establishment of one of the first local farming schools ... which was sponsored by Oxford Farming (Oxfam) and the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) and trained many farmers to utilize organic farming methods. Andrew also trained a number of Peace Corps volunteers in

organic farming. He was later, in the mid 1980s, commissioned by Oxfam and IAF to hold organic farming training courses in Haiti, which he visited on many occasions.

For his instrumental role in the field of organic farming, he was later recognised in 2002 by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO and the University of the West Indies and in March of [2004] by the Organic Agricultural Movement in Trinidad (*Andrew Royer: death of a pioneer*, The Chronicle, 2004:1B).

An associate of Royer's assessed his achievements thus: "He didn't rely on other people telling him what to do and as a consequence of that, he became an expert, receiving recognition from many overseas bodies" (Soil scientist David Lang, quoted in *Andrew Royer: death of a pioneer*, The Chronicle, 2004, 1B). Here we see Royer's pioneering work in organic agriculture represented as an outstanding and influential *home-grown* achievement.

Since 2004, organic agriculture has received government endorsement and support, most notably in the form of an officially approved plan to transform Dominica into an 'organic island' (Casimir et al., 2006). There is an active and growing non-governmental organization, the Dominica Organic Agriculture Movement (Dominica Organic Agriculture Movement, n.d.; United States Agency for International Development, 2011), which was formed in 2006 to promote the development of sustainable and environmentally-friendly organic agriculture in Dominica.

A report on organic agriculture in Dominica prepared for the United States Agency for International Development put forward the view that Dominicans have a "culture of concern for how their food is grown" (DiMatteo, 2007:7). In my experience, fruit and vegetable vendors in Roseau would use the claim that their produce was grown chemical-free as a special selling point. One organic farmer I spoke to said that his crops always sell successfully when he takes them to town because people know that he is selling healthy food, grown naturally. Interviewees often described their

ancestors' sustained good health and longevity as being a result of a natural organic lifestyle. This view was seen to be supported by the statements by elders, including one of Dominica's most famous centenarians (now deceased), to the effect that young people in the 21st century were unlikely to live to reach 100 because they were using too many chemicals to grow their food (*Petite Savanne centenarian still going strong*, The Chronicle, 2001; Toulon, 2001; *Ma Pampo, the original green Granny*, The Chronicle, 2001).

In my conversations with some farmers who use organic and low-input agricultural methods, they often made the point that organic farming practices were not new to Dominica. Rather, organic farming was a return to the way of their forefathers. Their parents and grandparents had not had access to or could not afford to make extensive use of agrochemicals, and had farmed successfully without. Several respondents told of how personal experience informed their decision to eschew the use of chemical inputs. Their parents and other farmers in the village had begun using chemical fertilizers and pesticides—in some cases having been encouraged to do so by regional and international agricultural research and development agencies—and had realized, after a period of use, that these chemicals were having observably adverse impacts on the productivity and health of the soil, as well as on the health of creatures such as butterflies, ants and soil insects.

I actually did field demonstrations, field trials of fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, nematicides, all kinds of -cides. In other words, introducing into the natural systems these toxic substances, and seeing the resistance of the farmers, and watching how the system organized itself to force the farmer to use these poisons by linking financing and marketing to the use of these substances. Now, I didn't understand these things very clearly, at 17 years. But I remember farmers telling me what is going to happen. Because what they would do, they would take small amounts of substances, and they would put it and they would watch ants and other insects eat it and die. Millipedes, centipedes, anything, birds. And they knew that if it was killing them [the insects, etc.] it was killing them [the farmers]. And I remember so many vigorous debates and arguments by the leaders, the natural leaders of the farmers against the use of these things. And of course there were the

farmers who said, oh we have to use them, we have to get modern, and then there were these other guys who said, these things will kill us, they are going to destroy us, it's going to destroy our soil (Malcolm, 60s, Giraudel).

When the soil has been poisoned with pesticides or other chemicals, the caterpillars stay above ground and feed on the plants instead and become more of a nuisance and then you have to find a pesticide for them, and a pesticides for this that and the other. And Daddy always said so... When we talk to our parents about organic methods, they tell us that's all [they] knew, pen manure, and natural foods, and herbal medicines. ...So our generations are remembering [the organic message] from our childhood and learning it from our parents... (Marcus and Ann Pierre)

In this light, the adoption of eco-friendly organic agriculture practices can be viewed and understood by Dominicans not as a novelty or an introduced innovation, but as a return to the old, natural Dominican way of doing things.

Another successful local conservationist undertaking in Dominica has been the sustained effort to protect and conserve the island's parrot species. The Sisserou in particular is a national icon, featured on the national flag, the coat-of-arms and the mace that, upon Dominica's independence in 1978, was adopted for ceremonial use in the House of Assembly. Images of the Sisserou have been used to convey social messages about, among others, responsible sexual behaviour, good nutrition and the importance of Dominica's tourism industry (Figure 18), and Sisserou portrayals are often common in Dominica's cultural arts.

Both of Dominica's endemic parrot species have been subject to some form of legal protection since the early 20th century (Christian, 1994). Such protection was strengthened in 1976 with the enactment of the Forestry and Wildlife Act. Dominica's Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division has for more than twenty years engaged in a series of initiatives intended to raise awareness of the importance of parrot conservation.



Figure 18: Sisserou messages (top right and bottom photos by author)

The conservation message has been delivered via a variety of media, including radio and television, newspaper, popular theatres, newspaper articles, newsletter and presentations to schools and community groups (Christian, et al., 1994b; Christian et al., 1996).

In 1985 a national week of activities, dubbed 'Parrot Week' was held to educate the people of Dominica about "the ecology, status and national importance of the parrots, as well as the need for public involvement in their conservation" (Christian et al., 1994b:362). During Parrot Week, posters and bumper stickers were distributed free of charge; one such sticker bore the slogan 'Parliament loves our Parrots' (Christian et al., 1994b), indicating

high-level political endorsement of the parrot conservation cause. In the early 1990s, then President of Dominica, Sir Clarence Seignoret provided further high-profile support when he adopted parrot protection as a personal cause (Christian et al., 1994b).

'Project Sisserou' was launched in 1989. The project was a collaboration between the Government of Dominica, the RARE Center for Tropical Bird Conservation and BirdLife International, and its objectives included the acquisition of privately owned parrot habitat, the establishment of a national park for the purpose of protecting parrots and their habitat, and the continued enhancement of public environmental and conservation awareness (Christian, James and Charles, 1994). As a result, in January 2000 Morne Diablotin National Park was established (Demko, 1999; *New National Park to protect parrots*, 2000). The necessary land acquisition efforts were funded in part by money obtained from schoolchildren's fundraising and from voluntary donations from the public (Christian, James and Charles, 1994).

Dominica's parrot protection project has been a success, not only in promoting the recovery of parrot populations, but in educating Dominicans about these two rare birds and securing widespread public support for their conservation. A 1989 survey found that the majority of Dominicans surveyed were both knowledgeable about the Sisserou parrot and supportive of Government spending on parrot conservation (Butler, 1989 cited in Christian, James and Charles, 1994). It seems likely that this positive public attitude and Dominicans' sense of the 'importance and uniqueness of the Sisserou parrot' (Christian, James and Charles, 1994:363) can be attributed in part to the consistent portrayal of the Sisserou and Jaco as 'Dominica's parrots', 'our parrots', and the emphasis on Dominica's specialness as the parrots' unique home, the only place in the world where they can be found.

Such portrayals were not incidental to the conservation effort. A long-standing partner in Dominica's parrot conservation work has been the RARE conservation network (Demko, 1999; *New National Park to protect parrots*,

2000; Reillo et al., 2011). RARE's conservation messages do not place emphasis on nature as a global resource to be managed on a universal basis for the universal good. Instead, based on past experience in conservation in the Caribbean¹⁷, RARE promotes a conservation approach that is responsive to and seeks to cultivate relationship to nature based on a sense of place and local particularity. This approach is intended to "inspire[] people to take pride in the species and habitats that make *their community unique*" (RARE Conservation, n.d., emphasis added). RARE's reliance on a locally-focused strategy, and its success thus far, suggests that such approaches are likely to have more purchase in Dominica than initiatives based on notions of nature as global property and the shared heritage of all humanity.

Elements of RARE's 'community pride' method are visible in a relatively new wildlife conservation effort in Dominica, focused on the protection of sea turtles. Much work has been done to enlist the co-operation of people from villages in the vicinity of turtle nesting beaches and to position them as the wardens and protectors of their villages' turtles and turtle habitats. Articles and press releases in support of turtle conservation asserted that "Few other places in the world are as lucky as Dominica in the number of species of sea turtles that are found in the local waters and beaches" (*RoSTI project sponsors Dominicans' trip to turtle project in Trinidad*, The Chronicle, 2004). They further emphasized that "leatherback, green and hawksbill sea turtles ... swim ... nearly 15 to 20,000 miles ... just to return to their homeland of Dominica, where they were born 25 to 30 years ago" (*It's turtle season again!*, The Chronicle, 2005; see also *Historical hatching of sea turtles at Rosalie*, The Chronicle, 2004). Turtles were referred to as 'ours', the Creole name (*cawine*) for the leatherback turtle was used, and much was made of Dominica's special status as one of the few places in the world where sea turtles can be observed. These messages served, as intended (Byrne, 2011), to imbue the conservation efforts with a sense of the turtles as specially

¹⁷ The RARE approach originated on the island of St. Lucia in the 1980s, and was replicated and refined in other Eastern Caribbean countries—including Dominica—before being formalised for implementation in communities across the world (RARE, n.d.)

connected to Dominica, as Dominica's turtles and indeed, as Dominican turtles.



Figure 19: Conservation billboard - 'Save our nature island. Protect our wildlife for this and future generations. Dominica's wild animals and plants are part of the country's heritage', on the road to Bellevue Chopin (photo by author)

My argument here is not that these particular examples—i.e., organic farming, parrot conservation, turtle conservation—of eco-friendly, conservationist activities are entirely and exclusively Dominican, untouched by external influences. Rather I wish to make the point that they are initiatives that allow Dominicans to draw on local narratives and notions of Dominica, and of nature and people's relationships thereto in Dominica. They allow the construction of a conservation narrative that is not based on "place-less environmentalism" (Banerjee, 2009), but rather on Dominicans' "local place-based sensitivities" (McGinnis, 1999:8). Conservation becomes

imbued with local knowledge and affect; it becomes a set of principles and activities with which Dominicans can identify in “historical, cultural and material terms” (Lipschutz, 1999:101).

8.7 Conclusion

As in my discussion of tourism natures, one of my goals in this chapter has been to highlight the ways that embodied engagement with the natural world is a key element of nature conservation in Dominica—and arguably in general. In my description and discussion of the field work carried out by the FWPD, I have directed attention to conservation work not in terms of particular projects or certain conceptions of nature, but as active embodied work involving and comprising practices in, encounters with, and experiences of the natural world.

This perspective does not negate the reality that conservation and environmentalism are also understood to involve and be based on particular ideas about nature. In Dominica, the perceived conservationist ideal of pristine untouched nature is somewhat problematic. To some extent resistance to this ideal seem to be related to what Jaffe (2006) describes as two distinguishing characteristics of Caribbean folk ecologies, i.e. the emphasis placed on nature’s instrumental, rather than intrinsic, value and the belief that human beings have the right to dominion over the earth. The further possibility that I have explored in this chapter is that a reluctance to wholeheartedly embrace the Western conservation paradigm may be related not only to Dominicans’ way of thinking about nature in general, but to their way of thinking about *their* nature in particular, and about their right to determine and express their own relationship to their own natural environments.

I wrote in chapter 2 that my work is not a rebuttal of Ringel and Wylie’s (1979) findings about Dominicans’ perceptions and concepts of nature. Nonetheless, in writing this chapter, their assertions about Dominicans’ lack

of a conservation ethic, and that “conservation is more or less incomprehensible in local terms” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:47), have been continually on my mind. The failure to perceive any ethic of concern for nature in Dominica is, I believe, an inevitable consequence of the failure to recognize Dominicans’ concepts of nature in the first place. To bemoan the absence of a Western ethic—“as culture-bound as any other” (Ringel and Wylie, 1979:47)—in Dominica seems to be to miss the point. It is more fruitful, I think, to consider what might be the features of a *Dominican* ethic of concern for Dominican nature. When I say Dominican nature, I refer not only to Dominicans’ sense of ownership of the island’s natural resources, but also—even more so—to nature as Dominicans conceptualize, perceive, experience, live with and value it. Conservation efforts in Dominica are likely to be better received and more successful when they are presented in a way that recognizes and responds to the features of Dominicans’ relationships to nature and their natural world.

9 Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore Dominicans' perceptions of nature and the natural world, with a focus on how these perceptions are linked to people's practices in and experiences of Dominica's natural and social environment. In the course of my research, my own rather prosaic and limited definitions and ideas of nature have been expanded by my conversations with Dominican respondents, my experience of Dominica and associated guided encounters with the natural world. I began my research thinking of nature in terms of material objects, such that relations with nature would involve the ways one interacted and made use of those objects in daily life. The research process and its outcomes have opened my mind to the meanings that are associated with those objects, and to the idea of nature as a richly affective arena.

As I have shown, people's relationships to nature and the ways they talk about these relationships are imbued with affect and associations, coloured by their emotions, memories, and personalities. Nature is a venue in which they perform and express particular aspects of themselves, and for some people their interactions with nature are key aspects of their identity.

Dominicans' ideas about nature do not seem to me to be entirely captured by the definitions of nature, either physical or metaphysical, provided and discussed by thinkers such as Williams (1976, 2005) and Soper (1995). This is not to diminish or discredit the usefulness or applicability of these definitions, but to identify certain elements of the meanings of nature, of why it matters to people, that they overlook.

I suggest that such oversights are because some academic definitions do not make sufficient room for consideration of the ways in which concepts of nature are co-existent with practices, the way they are influenced, reinforced and amended by our experiences and knowledge of the material natural

world. In my view, what is absent in analyses such as Soper's and Williams's writings about nature, insightful as they are, is a sense of the presence of the natural world and the ways in which people's experiences of that world flesh out and give life to their ideas of nature. This presence of nature is what authors such as Franklin (2002), Macnaghten and Urry (1998, 2001) have sought to recover, with their interest in how concepts of nature arise from, co-evolve with and are supported by people's practices *in* nature, as well as by the social frameworks in which such practices take place.

With a focus on personal embodied experience, I have intended for my research to serve as a counterbalance to ideas about hegemonic discourses of nature and their imposition. This is not to say that such discourses do not exist and function; I have discussed the influence of conservationist discourse on the whaling debate in Dominica, and made reference to how Dominica's appeal to tourists from North America and Europe may have its origin in the idea of tropical nature as an escape or refuge from modern civilization. However, people's relationships with nature are not solely a product of discourses, they are shaped also by their personal experiences, interactions and associations. It is perhaps more useful to think of discourses as being filtered through the fabric of people's experiences and subsequently interpreted and given meaning in different ways. So, for example, the idea that nature should be protected is explained by Dominicans variously in terms of respect for nature's essential independent existence, or as an ethic that is in keeping with traditional Dominican ways of life, or with reference to the need to sustainably manage resources that are economically valuable to the country. Attention to individual ideas and experiences helps to shed light on how discourses take effect, how experiences, both past and present, can be (re-)interpreted in light of discourse, and how experiences serve to resist and reframe the effects of discourse.

My decision to focus on individual experience should not be read as ignorance of or disregard for global discourses of nature and the environment. I do not deny that these discourses influence people's practices and perceptions, and the wider context within which these practices and

perceptions exist and take shape. Indeed in chapters 3, 4, and 5 I discuss at some length some of the discourses and constructs that have historically been brought to bear in and on Dominica, effects of which are still evident in the present. And of course, the discursive context that influences people's relationships to nature is not provided solely by discourses about nature. As mentioned in chapter 1, the decline of the banana trade had a major impact on relationships with nature in Dominica. This decline was a result of decisions taken at the World Trade Organization, decisions intimately linked to discourses about economic globalization and freedom of trade, but largely unrelated to discourses of nature, ecology and the environment. In any case, it was not my aim to use discourse as a primary means of examining and understanding how people relate to nature in Dominica; such a top-down analytical approach, while valid and applicable, would have been contrary to my goal of emphasizing and valorizing individual personal experience and practice as a means of knowing and making sense of the world. My approach does not render the wider context irrelevant, but for the most part I have grounded my analysis in the context that was produced and highlighted by research participants and respondents. I have sought to see context not as something that is external, static and independently determinant of participants' actions and perceptions, but rather as something that they create, construct and use. As I have alluded to at various junctures in this thesis, the context people bring to bear arises from global discourses as well as from their situated perspectives and positions in relation to, *inter alia*, ethnicity, capital and labour, class and socio-economic standing, education, employment, and gender.

My focus on the particular is also not intended as a wholesale rejection of generalization as a research methodology. It is true that in chapters 2 and 5, I express some concern about the dangers of faulty, overly broad, overly rigid, or biased generalizations. However, this does not mean that I believe that generalization is inherently meaningless or that informative and meaningful generalization is impossible. After all, much of the seventh chapter of this thesis is concerned with discussing some of the commonly occurring—that is to say, the general—features of Dominicans' talk and ideas about nature. For

the most part, though, I have chosen to valorize particularity because I believe that there is much to be learned from careful attention to the specific and individual, just as there are things to be learned through a generalizing approach.

Generalization can facilitate identification and analysis of the wide scope of relationships and connections that operate in a given situation; attention to the particular leads to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how these relationships work, of how (to return to an earlier discussion) context is brought to bear. Through attention to the particular, researchers can identify cases and means by which general discourses, theories and orders are reinforced, reinterpreted and resisted. Attention to the particular can alert the researcher to sites of difference—for instance, the distinctions between Creole and Kalinago perspectives on nature, between women who grow flowers and men who grow bananas, between the estate labourer and the self-sufficient peasant farmer walking up the same hill, between the rural peasantry and the landed urban gentry and the urban or suburban landless poor—and provide a starting point for analysis of and new insights into the sources and significance of these difference.

My final argument on this point is that my research, with its focus on embodiment, practical knowledge and specific experience, necessitates the “priority of the particular” (Nussbaum, 1990 cited in Flyvbjerg, 2001:58) because, to use the words of Aristotle, “it is concerned with conduct, and conduct has its sphere in particular circumstances” (Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, cited in Flyvbjerg, 2001:58). It should be noted here that prioritizing the particular means not being “concerned with universals *only*” (Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, cited in Flyvbjerg, 2001:58, emphasis added); it does not by any means entail dispensing with or denying the value of generalization altogether.

Speaking of generalization: when I told people in Dominica that my research was about nature and people’s relationships thereto, I generally received a response along the lines of “Well, you’ve come to the right place for that!”

But although the evident presence of nature in Dominica, and its identity as the nature island, were vital inspirations for this research, it is far from essential that research of this type be carried out in spatial settings that are seen as special natural places. During the course of my research, I found myself increasingly conscious of some of the ways in which nature-related ideas cropped up in conversations and interactions at home in Barbados. Instances include a discussion about whether the monkeys who were becoming increasingly bold in their visits to a friend's backyard were intruding on her territory or whether she and her family were intruding on theirs; newspaper articles about objections to measures, often represented as having been taken by "foreigners", that were seen to be restricting local people's rights of access to beaches; my Aunt Julia's pleasure in serving a salad prepared with tomatoes she'd grown herself; another relative's recollection of a former Prime Minister's remark that he looked forward to the day when there would no longer be a single blade of sugar cane in the Barbadian landscape. These are all elements of people's relationships to nature, and I do not doubt that further investigation, even in the built-up and densely populated setting Barbados provides, would prove as interesting and rewarding as my research in the green and rugged nature island. I shall not dare to speculate on how my findings would have differed from or resembled those obtained in Dominica. The key points remain, though, that people encounter and experience nature in a variety of locations outside of the wild, untouched or rural, and that people's perceptions of nature are shaped both by the sorts of nature they routinely encounter and by the shifting contexts in which those encounters take place. People's ideas about nature in general acquire specific substance and meaning in and through their experience of particular historical, social, political, economic and environmental conditions.

I agree with Adrian Franklin that nature is found in locations other than "largely touristic or environmentally spatial settings" (2002:7) and "fields, forests and wild areas—place in some sense separated from the living spaces and everyday of civil society" (2002:7). However, I have sought to gently interrogate the idea that spaces of "*nature leisure and tourism*", as Franklin

puts it (2002:7, emphasis in original) exist “at [a] remove from everyday life” (2002:8). Dominica itself can be seen as an example of this. From Franklin’s perspective, perhaps, the island exists chiefly as one of the “more distant natures” to which people make “occasional trips” (2002:8), a notion reinforced by its touristic depiction as the nature island, where visitors can, according to its tourism slogan ‘defy the everyday’. But for the island’s residents, the nature island *is*, to use Franklin’s own words, the “living space[] and everyday of civil society” (2002:7). As I pointed out in chapter 5, the natural sites that serve as tourist attractions in Dominica are, for tour guides, their workplaces and the spaces of their daily encounters with nature. Similarly, Dominica’s “preserved areas of natural significance” (Franklin, 2002:7), its national parks and forest reserves, are the places where the field staff of the Forestry, Wildlife and Parks Division carry out their day-to-day work, and are also frequented by cultivators, hunters and fishers. Franklin is critical of the way in which “social accounts of nature understood as environment and tourism fail to penetrate ... everyday natures” (2002:8) that exist on our doorsteps. His response is to direct attention to the natures that can be found and encountered in cities and suburbs. A complementary approach would be to pay attention also to cases where people’s routine engagements with nature occur in the spaces and contexts of nature as tourism and environment. It is certainly worth giving consideration, as I do in this thesis, to the ways that tourism and conservation are not just about leisure or environmental politics, but can be the embodied tasks, activities and practices through which people engage with the natural world.

Overall, empirical investigations of people’s ideas and definitions of nature and how these ideas are expressed can make an important contribution to academic and philosophical discussion of what nature—the word and the material reality it refers to—means, and how and why it matters to laypeople in the context of everyday use.

Exploring how nature is perceived and thought about in different places, settings and circumstances also expands and enriches academic understanding. Research in this vein helps to trace the circulation of global

discourses of nature and to assess the reach and impact of what are described as the most common concepts of nature. It can introduce significant new perspectives, as well as provoking re-examination of prevailing ideas and of the assumptions and generalizations implicit in them. For example, my research in Dominica and other similar projects in the Caribbean (Ringel and Wylie, 1979; Jaffe, 2006, 2008) show that religion and the supernatural are important aspects of how people think about nature, even though such concepts are not prominent—or are relegated to the status of relics—in academic treatises on social meanings of nature. In another example, academic literature has placed considerable emphasis on how notions of nature and the environment are becoming increasingly intertwined, but my research in Dominica draws attention to the failure of the two terms to achieve complete synonymy, to how people think through the distinctions between them, and to what these distinctions might mean.

My research is not only significant from an academic perspective. The clear policy and practical implications of this sort of research relate to its potential to inform environmental management. Lay people are more likely to engage with environmental management policies and programmes when those approaches are seen as germane to their “emic understanding of the environment” (Jaffe, 2006:221). Research such as mine helps to identify those understandings, which were discussed in chapter 7: in Dominica nature is commonly understood as having been created by God, and as existing for human use; nature in Dominica is thought of as being one of the island’s essential and exceptional distinguishing characteristics; and the best way to know nature is through direct experience.

Ringel and Wylie (1979) in their research in Dominica in the late 1970s, and Jaffe (2006, 2008) in her research in Jamaica and Curaçao from 2000-2004, both found “religious-based environmental worldviews” (Jaffe, 2006:240) to be fundamental elements of people’s concepts of nature. My research produced similar findings, and so can be seen as validating Ringel and Wylie’s and Jaffe’s proposals that environmental policymakers might wish to appeal to religious outlooks and make use of religious institutions in order to

deliver environmentalist messages. I would issue a note of caution however, that action in this regard would benefit from greater information about doctrinal and lay theologies of nature, the environment and human relationships thereto. Scholars with an interest in religious ethics and environmental problems have made it clear that we cannot assume that religious worldviews and institutions are compatible with and can be instrumentalized in support of an ethic of environmental concern. My own research does not permit me to reach any clear conclusions on this matter as it relates to Dominica. I therefore reiterate remarks made in chapter 7, that there is a need for more empirical consideration of local ecotheologies.

Another point of agreement between my findings and Jaffe's is that in Dominica, as in Jamaica and Curaçao, the values attached to nature are predominantly essentially instrumental, rather than intrinsic. Jaffe suggests that environmental messengers would be wise to focus on "taking into account the instrumental value placed on nature" (2006:240) rather than "trying to persuade the population to change its behaviour on account of nature's intrinsic value" (2006:240). I would add that said messengers might also wish to take into account how affective, emotional and cultural values are attached to nature, the ways in which particular aspects of the natural world are esteemed and thought of as important aspects of a country's heritage, of the identity of its people. They can harness these values in order to rally support for environmental causes; they may also be able to find ways to promote and encourage such values where they do not exist, by framing environmental discourses in terms of other values and qualities that Dominicans see as integral to their cultural and national identity.

Beyond environmental policy, knowledge of Dominicans' relationships to nature can also have implications for tourism policy and practice: tourism policymakers, marketers, and practitioners can use this knowledge to find ways to make people's relationships with nature part of the nature island tourism strategy. One aspect of this might involve bringing touristic experiences of nature into villages and communities, providing opportunities not only to engage in adventurous exploration of nature, but also to become

acquainted with how people practice nature at their homes, on their farms and in their gardens. Steps in this regard have already been taken with the initiation of community ecotourism projects, such as garden tours in the village of Giraudel and organic farm tours in Bellevue Chopin. Another option would be to present nature in Dominica not only by delivering information about what things are called and their properties, but by incorporating accounts and representations that are grounded in and descriptive of Dominicans' ideas of and embodied engagements with nature. A third related possibility is to incorporate into touristic presentations accounts of how nature in general, as well as particular natural places and spaces, has featured in Dominica's history and is part of the island's culture and traditions. All of these are means of telling a story of nature in Dominica that not only describes the natural world, but expresses how it matters. A recent tourism policy document suggests that tourism officials see the 'nature island' branding as limiting; the recommendation has been made that Dominica should instead be promoted as being more than just nature, with a new emphasis on the island's cultural attractions. Perhaps this is an instance of the nature-culture dichotomy that scholars have identified as a keystone of Western concepts of nature: attractions are seen as either natural or cultural. What about instead looking at and capitalizing on the ways in which these two arenas overlap, on the ways in which nature and relationships thereto are part of Dominican culture and heritage? Such an approach might appeal to tourism practitioners, several of who feel that current marketing strategies are too focused on appealing to metropolitan notions of nature as a liminal space, rather than representing the way in which nature in Dominica is part of people's everyday experiences. Tourism practitioners, and other Dominicans, are also sceptical about proposed tourism campaigns that would de-emphasize nature, because they see nature as being an integral aspect of what Dominica is, what Dominica is about. A marketing strategy that seeks to integrate Dominican nature and Dominican culture might attract greater local endorsement and support.

In the preceding paragraph, I mentioned tourism strategies that incorporate knowledges of nature that are grounded in people's engagements with

nature. This, of course, presumes that people have such engagements to draw on. This brings me to my last point, that of practice as a means of knowing nature. I see this point as significant not because it was one of the methodological cornerstones of my research, but because practical knowledge was mentioned and valorized by so many respondents and research participants. As we saw in chapter 7, there is a sense that this practical knowledge is in decline in Dominica, that people no longer have the active interaction with, and the resultant knowledge of, nature that was commonplace in the past. An important aspect of raising environmental awareness and encouraging environmental care might involve not only teaching people, particularly young people, about the environment, but encouraging and facilitating regular engagements with nature, both in the context of leisure (including the sorts of leisure natures that preceded mass tourism development in Dominica) and of play, as well as of work. I make no claim that such engagements will produce a return to the nature relations of yore; the context in which they would take place would be vastly different. One of the differences would be that interactions are likely to be coloured by new notions of nature as the environment. However, this does not negate their potential to serve as a basis for fostering an ethic of care for the natural world. Such a strategy could not only actualize evidence that interaction with nature and pro-environment behaviour go hand in hand, it would also be in keeping with the value accorded by Dominicans to active and practical knowledge of nature.

I wish to conclude by adding some qualifications to the discussion above, and to any reading of them in which they might be seen as recommendations for Dominican planners and policy-makers. I do not claim that these are conclusions that would not have been conceivable without my research. Much of what I have learned and described in this thesis, the conclusions I reach, the suggestions that I outline, is based on what I have learned from Dominicans who have shared their knowledge and ideas with me, and who permitted me to share some of their experiences. I feel that it would be presumptuous then to position myself as an authority on Dominica and to present the preceding discussion as authoritative recommendations; in so

doing I would be vulnerable to accusations of trying to tell people what they already know. Instead, I have presented illustrations of the ways in which people's ideas about relationships to nature are and can be, to use a current catch-phrase, policy-relevant, making a case for them to be given greater consideration and treated with greater esteem.

In the final reckoning I would hope, perhaps somewhat idealistically, for this thesis to stand not primarily as testimony to my scholarship or erudition, but as a witness to the richness of Dominicans' ideas about and knowledges of the nature with which they live.

THE END

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Appendices

Appendix A: Outline of Interview Questions

Introduce self and research (studying how people relate to and live with nature).

1. Please tell me your name, age and what you do?
2. Where in Dominica are you from? Where do you live now and how long have you lived there?
3. Tell me a bit about yourself, about your work, activities, interests, pastimes.

[For tourism operators:

- 3a. What do you do/offer in terms of a tourism experience in Dominica? How is nature part of your work/ the product you offer as a tourism worker?

For representatives of government environment/agricultural/tourism agencies:

- 3b. Tell me a bit about the organisation and its work and what it does? How is nature part of your work and the organisation's work?]
4. What are some things that you do that you would consider to be interactions with nature? Why do you do them? What do you like about them? What do you learn from them?
5. How is nature part of your daily life in general? How do you meet nature in your daily life?
6. Do you think the role nature plays in your life and your relationship with nature is different from what it was in your parents' or grandparents' lives? How so?
7. Do you think younger generations these days have a different kind of relationship with nature? In what way?
8. What does it mean to you when it is said that Dominica is the nature island?

9. What do you think are the most important aspects of nature in Dominica? And why?
10. Are there any aspects of nature—places or spaces or things—that are important or special to you personally? Why?
11. What about nature and development or progress in Dominica? Do you think nature helps development or holds it back? In what ways?
12. How important do you think nature is to Dominican culture?
13. What is nature? What does the word 'nature' mean to you? What does 'natural' mean?
14. Do you think nature and the environment are the same thing or different? Why/why not?

Appendix B: List of interviewees

Interviewees cited in thesis	
1. Trevor, 60s, Wallhouse	32. Alex, 48, Point Mulatre
2. Esther Thomas, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism	33. Jalen, 22, Salisbury
3. Garnette Joseph, Carib Chief	34. Helen, 66, Giraudel
4. Joe, age unknown, Carib Territory	35. Harrison, age unknown, Riviere Cyrique
5. Elizabeth Wayland, Head of Marketing, Discover Dominica Authority	36. Tony, 47, Bellevue Chopin
6. Kenneth, 60s, male, Morne Prosper	37. Joy, 29, Shawford
7. Bruce, —, tour operator	38. Steven, 73, Check Hall/USA
8. Hampton, 58, tour operator	39. Eric, 32, Bath Estate
9. Marlon, 29, tour guide	40. James, 57, Newtown
10. Kate, 70s, hotel operator	41. Frederick, 55, Goodwill
11. Wilson, 29, Bath Estate	42. Martin, 63, Jimmit
12. Carlos, 38, Newtown	43. Denis, 54, Morne Daniel
13. Rosa, 46, Roseau	44. Denise, 36, Roseau
14. Bertha, 60s, Giraudel	45. Paul, 47, Roseau
15. Keith, 47, Concord	46. Leroy, 70s, Petite Savanne
16. Barbara, 44, Copthall	47. William, 50, Mero
17. Wayne, 55, Roseau	48. Jason, 61, Salisbury
18. Mr. Sutton, 61, Bellevue Chopin	49. Alwin Bully, Advisor to the Ministry of Culture
19. Mrs. Joseph, 60s	50. David Williams, Superintendent of National Parks
20. Mr. Joseph, 60s	51. Daniel, 51, Grand Bay
21. Marcus Pierre, age unknown,	52. Franklin, 40s, Roseau
22. Ann Pierre, age unknown,	53. Lewis, 45, Layou
23. Beatrice Pierre, 58	54. Thomas, 47, Soufriere
24. Ellis, 49, Eggleston	55. Mac, 39, Canefield
25. Khadija, 24, Layou,	56. Adrienne, 55, Massacre
26. Andrew Magloire, Head, Dominica's Fisheries Department	57. Roberta, age unknown, Riviere Cyrique
27. Peter, 50, Mahaut	58. Sobers Esprit, Tourism Technical Specialist, Ministry of Tourism
28. Campbell, 50s, Jimmit	59. George, 66, Goodwill/Bioche
29. Kwame, 45, Dublanc	60. Vernon, 50s, Bellevue Chopin
30. Cassandra, 30, Shawford	61. Malcolm, 60s, Giraudel
31. Philip, 50, Wesley	

Interviewees not cited in thesis	
62. TK, 29, female, Trafalgar	77. MR, age unknown, male, tourism operator
63. Richard Allport, Acting Director of Agriculture	78. FB, male, age unknown, Newtown
64. MI, age unknown, female, tourism operator	79. GM, age unknown, female, Roseau
65. Lloyd Pasal, Director, Environmental Coordinating Unit	80. RA, 45, female, tourism operator
66. Yvanette Baron-George, Programme Coordinator, Waitukubuli National Trail Project	81. BR, 50s, female, Belles
67. RK, 50s, male, Roseau	82. Charles Maynard, Ambassador to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
68. KD, age unknown, female, Pond Casse	83. SC, 41, female, Roseau
69. JE, 60s, male, Newtown	84. Lennox Honychurch, historian
70. VD, 50, female, Paix Bouche	85. PD, 46, male, Giraudel
71. NG, 25, female, Giraudel	86. NR, 50s, female, Giraudel
72. CP, 54, female, Goodwill/Laplaine	87. HE, 72, male, Morne Daniel
73. WA, 54, female, Wesley	88. ME, 35, male, Petit Savanne/Stowe
74. HL, 66, female, tourism operator, Stowe	89. WT, 41, male, tourism operator
75. LE, 50s, male, Kingshill	90. Polly Pattullo, author, Trafalgar/UK
76. TF, 24, female, Canefield	91. MC, 30s, male, Pottersville

Appendix C: Sample Interview Transcripts

C1: Interview with Hampton, tour guide, June 18, 2009 in the Botanic Gardens, Roseau, Dominica

TY: If you could just say for the recording your name, your full name.

H: My full name is [redacted].

TY: And if I may be so impolite as to ask your age?

H: I am, presently, I was born in October 1950, so that would put me at what, 58?

TY: 58. Okay, thank you. And I was told by [name redacted] that you used to work with him?

H: Yes, I did, I worked with him for quite a while.

TY: And now do you do independent tour guiding? What do you do now, how would you describe your occupation now?

H: I do independent tour guiding. I also offer 24-hour taxi service and I love to fish, I'm a nature freak.

TY: Okay, good. How long have you been doing the tour guiding?

H: It's more than 20 years, and counting.

TY: And counting. And how did you get into tour guiding, what made you start to do it?

H: My love for tourism began long before meeting [name redacted], but he more than anyone else motivated me to get into it, called on me to assist him and gave me all of the leads that I needed to stay in it. And I left him, he came back and got me, I left him again, and he needed help, and the last time I left him I said you know, listen I'm going to just go and if I can help in any way, I will help you but I'm not working for another guy any more.

TY: Okay, fair enough. And what do you think are your specialties and strengths as a guide to the island of Dominica? What do you bring that...

H: Well, my specialty really is birding - I love to go bird-watching, and I love plants. I love plants. And I love to be involved in product development, find new things, and get them, get used to them and introduce others to these new things. I love to do that.

TY: And what sorts of, what places do you take people when, what sorts of trip and tours do you take them on? What places do you go?

H: Well, wherever. If someone wants something out of the ordinary, I will do it. The Boiling Lake is one of my favourite hikes, but I'll also do mountain hikes, I'll also do other trips, fields trips, I'll also do forest trips, I'll also like to fish, so if someone wants to go fishing, I'll take them fishing. It doesn't matter. The fact that the numbers in Dominica are so few, compared to Barbados and some of the other islands, touristically, when something shows up you want to be there or to be able to at least deliver. That's one of the reasons why it is so well - in some other places you'd probably specialise in one field and stick to it, but in Dominica, you have to [inaudible]

TY: So say that I've come to Dominica and I know that I want to experience the nature island, but I don't have any fixed idea of where I want to go. I've heard that there are waterfalls and rivers and mountains and so forth. What are a couple of places that you would say to me, well here are good places that I think you should go to?

H: A few good places, if someone arrives here, first of all, I try to figure out what there interest is, and once they have relayed that to me, then I would tailor an outing based on the person's interests. Waterfalls are the, waterfalls are appealing, and we have a number of waterfalls in Dominica, but some of them are easily accessible, others are not as easy, and others are very tough, so based on the person's physical ability, I would take them to a waterfall that meets their physical needs. The easiest ones to access would be Trafalgar falls and Emerald Pool, but there are other waterfalls that are presently on the roster that were not on the popular roster touristically that have become part of the national landscape these days. And Ken and I were involved in popularising some of these waterfalls. For example, there's a waterfall at Penrise, where some people now call it one name, but we called in back then when we first started going there, we called it Alvan Falls. And um, Spanny's

Falls also, we went there first and started using it as a tourist site. Now it's very popular with the cruise shippers. And there are other places that we have taken people. But these are easy waterfalls to get to. Now if someone wants to go somewhere a little tougher than that, Spanny would come in there as a medium type hike. And there is Middleham Falls, that's a little tougher. Someone who wants something really tough now, we take them to Sari Sari Falls, Victoria Falls... And there are other waterfalls ... that we can take them to. So it all depends on the person's physical ability and of course time factor also has to be brought into consideration, so all of these put together, I would take them to the waterfall. So someone who is interested in waterfalls, I would do that. But what we generally do is the person may be interested in waterfalls, but you can add something to that and that would be icing on the cake. The Botanical Gardens, up Morne Bruce, around Roseau, or you could add Soufriere, Sulphur Springs, once there is time you could do that. So there are a number of other areas that you add to a waterfall outing that makes it more interesting. Because you would like, if the person has more time, you'd like to tantalise them to want to do more, so you add something there and the person wants to see something else.

TY: Spanny's Falls was the first place I went to in Dominica. I got off the plane and we got into a jeep and we went straight to Spanny's Falls. And I slipped on some moss and I fell right on my bottom. That was a good introduction to Dominica.

H: Well, since you went to Spanny's Falls first. When we first when there, a hurricane had just passed and there were logs and logs and logs in both pools. And we put together a group of young men with chainsaws. We went up there and with the chainsaws and our manpower, we cut up some of the logs and removed them and cleaned out the pools. SO that's how much we love that area. The hike itself is a great hike, and at first it used to be a lot more treacherous than it is now, but they have done some work with the waterfalls and the hike, the hike is good now.

TY: And how do you find places like that that were just, like sort of?

H: What I do, when I have a little down time, I go into nature and just disappear, and run into things that a lot of us take for granted. And that's

how I found Spanny's Falls. I'd heard about it and been told about it, but never really paid any interest. Then one day I decided that I was just going to walk, I do that all the time. And, uh, just bumped into something beautiful. And when I told a friend, he said, but there's another one behind there. So we decided well we, I told myself I want to see the other one. And the hiking, climbing on trees, holding roots and going up and lo and behold there's another beautiful waterfall just behind, almost parallel, almost there, not very far away. Just a little toughness, a little climb, a little willingness to really make some sacrifice and it's right there.

TY: And who did you hear about it from, who had you been hearing about it from?

H: Some of the villagers who knew about it and who just took it for granted?

TY: Okay.

H: Took it for granted.

TY: Did they use it in any way or did they just like pass it on...

H: Apparently they would go there every blue moon, it's not something that was very popularly used. They knew it was there and they went there, but not very often.

TY: So they would go and hang out and soak in the pools, swim in the pools, that sort of thing, every once in a while.

H: Yeah, but even the one by the road, Alvan, I think they call it Sisserou, is it Sisserou Falls, something like that, there was no trail going down, you had to rappel down and we cleaned out the places because there were bottles and cans and everything and plastics, we cleaned that out. So even if they were going there, but it wasn't well kept, but we went there and we started doing that and now it's pretty well maintained.

TY: Do you think it's well maintained, is it well-maintained because people don't do the littering and so on that they did before, or is it well-maintained because people might litter as much as they used to but you have people who would come through and clean it up.

H: I think people are more conscious of the need to keep the island clean and green and now more people are going there, so even if there is more garbage, more people are getting involved in keeping it clean.

TY: And when you're going, because you said that even if you're going to the waterfalls, you would try to expand the experience by taking people through other places and to other places. What are the sorts of messages that you try to convey to them about Dominica and about the places that they are passing through and about the nature island about the falls that they're going to? What sort of things do you try to tell them?

H: First of all I try to incorporate the history, the habits, the culture and if there is any economic spin-off from the area, I try to incorporate that and I try to sell the idea that Dominica is unique. Ah, I also convey the idea that I'm proud of being part of protecting Dominica and proud of being Dominican, and I really try to convey the idea that I do not really want to be anywhere else but here.

TY: And Dominica is unique in the Caribbean, unique in the world? In what ways?

H: First of all, in the Caribbean and in the wider world. For example, this is one of my stump statements, that this is one of the greenest of the Caribbean islands, if not the world. And I also, another stump statement is that it is the most mountainous in the Caribbean and per square mile it's possibly the most mountainous country in the world. And despite that it's green, green and beautiful, it's rugged and ruggedly beautiful. So those are my stump statements.

TY: You were asking me if I had seen anything to contradict the idea of Dominica as the nature island, what is the idea of Dominica as the nature island, what is your idea of Dominica as the nature island, what do you think that means? What does it mean to you?

H: Well, for me, of all the islands it is the most natural. And, um, there's a temptation these days because of the influx of television and, of late, the internet, there is a temptation to want to be like the others. Some people have this misused understanding of true development, hence it's a constant fight

to try to correct this, and as a result, I find myself many times in this battle to let people see that the more natural we remain, the better the country will be not only now but down the road. It is the nature island of the Caribbean, true - there are some practices that we have fought over the years, for example, agricultural practices. The period in the fifties or late 40s through now, well now there isn't this big emphasis in banana cultivation as back then. But that period, those decades saw an increase in the use of dangerous chemicals in banana cultivation and some of that has resulted in cancers that were never heard of, or maybe our knowledge base has increased so what we considered evil back then were cancers that we did not know about. So, um, but we have seen that. As a result we have seen, from those practices, we have seen the depletion or almost depletion of some fish stocks. And we also have seen, we've seen some of the rivers show signs, showing signs of stress. That is a direct result of abusing the privilege of being the nature island. So, some of these practices have upset some of us and we have fought to ensure that that is stopped or is reduced. And there are individuals whose names I can call, I belong to the not so active Dominica Conservation Association and Atherton Martin stands out as an individual...

TY: Um-hmm, I've been hearing his name a lot.

H: Stands out a lot in trying to help ... some of us and it has worked.

TY: Okay. That phrase you used "abusing the privilege of being the nature isle", I find that interesting, because what is the privilege of being the nature isle? I think that there's something behind it that, being from Barbados where things are completely different, what do you think is the privilege of being the nature isle... that says there's something about Dominica that you have to respect, and what is it?

H: The difference of this natural operation of Dominica is something we have now. Others do not have it; they are striving to develop that. We can lose that, by our practices. That is the reason I said that.

TY: Okay, I understand what you're saying. What would you say to the argument that if you want to develop economically you have to sacrifice

some of the nature, you have to cut down some trees, you have to clear some land.

H: I would say yes to the idea but I would supplant that with the fact that there must be a desire to replant trees. You may remove a tree to put a house at a certain spot, but that does not necessarily mean that because you have removed a tree, it takes away the reason for other trees to be replaced. You may have a lot and in the middle of where your house is going remove that tree, but why can't you put another tree somewhere towards the end of the lot, so of course, that is a source of oxygen right there. And that's one of the things we have to remember. Dominica, with all of these plants that we have there is a vast supply of oxygen just floating all over the place. Roseau for example used to be a place where there were all sorts of plants among the houses, mango trees, chennip trees, just name it, most of these yards had that. Now people are complaining about it being very hot, it's hot it's hot it's hot. Once you leave Roseau the temperature changes, the reason for that it plants are amount for a vast amount of that, of the nice temperature you enjoy elsewhere. Yes the height above sea level helps, that's also part of it, but the plants are responsible in a lot of ways for the way you feel. I've driven people through Dominica and once you leave Roseau their attitudes change. As a matter of fact they ask for air-condition sometimes, they may be nature lovers but the fact that it gets very hot in Roseau, they, "Would you turn the air-conditioning on?" Yeah, we turn it on. Once you leave Roseau, "Would you turn it off please? It's cold over here."

TY: So when did people start. Like you said the trees in the backyards and stuff and I noticed that too in Roseau, the lack of - well in Barbados it's breadfruit trees, you get breadfruit trees growing up everywhere - and I was surprised at the lack of that. When did people sort of start cutting down the trees and why, do you think?

H: It's a misunderstanding of development. Because you are able to build a modern building doesn't necessarily mean that a tree is going to hurt that building. And some people began to believe that in order to keep that house intact you had to keep the trees away, so they started cutting down trees. Back then when they started doing that most of the buildings were wood

structures anyway, and even if you had a downstairs out of concrete, the top part would have been wood, so that they complained that the trees were tending, were starting to rot the wood, so they cut down the trees. But, uh, they also lost some of the economics that went along with having those trees in the yard. For example, if you had a breadfruit tree in your yard, you were able to harvest breadfruit and take it to the market to sell or to give to a neighbour. If you had a chennip tree in your yard you could sell the crop to someone who bought the crop, so when that tree bears you'd sell the crop to an entrepreneur who'd purchase then and he'd go and then sell that and there'd be that turnover. The same thing happened to mango trees. When they cut that down, then that ceased to happen. Of course, it also opened the door to the villagers who were involved in those things to start selling the stuff. But, while the villagers benefited from the commerce, it is the city that is suffering because of the heat. And it's that and the influx of cars that contributed to the heat that we feel right now in Roseau. And that's one of the reasons we feel so passionate about doing anything to affect this little green spot right here at the edge of the city. And you might have heard, you may not have been here long enough to hear the argument that started

TY: Something about road expansion

H: About the building of a road through the Botanical Gardens. And it's starting to brew. And some of us feel very passionate about it. Others so no understand the implications of that, so we have to do a lot more work to pass this information over and over again and allow it to sink in. Because if it, and with an election year, there is the desire to accelerate things to prove a point; once the damage is done it's done.

TY: Um-hmm, because I was thinking as you were saying that, once you cut down a mature tree to put up a house, people can say, oh plant a new tree in your yard, but if the tree is mature and you build your house around it, you know the tree has sort of expanded in the directions it's going to expand, but if you plant a new tree now, it's a different and more tricky thing...

H: Absolutely -

TY: It's not that easy to just put up a new tree once the house is built. Um, going back to, a little bit to the earlier, when you were talking about some of the places that you found, Spanny's Falls and so on, where people would go once in a blue moon, do you think, do they go there, as far as you know, now that they know they are tourist attractions. Do Dominican people go there more often...

H: Absolutely, absolutely.

TY: Okay, and they do the same things they would have done before, but they go there more often because they have more of a sense that they're special.

H: Yeah, yeah.

TY: Um, in general how do you think Dominicans perceive and relate to nature? You were talking about you know the idea of development and nature not being a part, in a sense, development. Do you think that's a general attitude, or do you think it's more complicated than that, more nuanced than that?

H: It can be complicated. The average Dominica, consciously and unconsciously tends to want to see the island protected. However, it's a paradox, because you want protection, at the same time you want to see development. Dominica historically has protected itself. Over the years, over the centuries, Dominica has tended to protect itself. And when it comes, when it gets to the point where things get really tough, then there is this tendency to migrate to other places. I remember, in the 50s, it was, well before the 50s it used to be Curacao and Cuba, in the 40s and in the 50s then it became England and, uh, England and England, and then later on it became the US, Canada and uh, in the 60s, I remember the Virgin Islands became a big thing and then later on St. Maarten, Guadeloupe. So there's uh when that happens, rather than some people who surrendered to everything would leave and go. And generally some people say it's a better life. But some of the best years that I can remember were the years when agriculture was king in Dominica. Things flowed, at the same time I also saw the damage done to the environment. In order to grow bananas, you have to

deforest. But there was this period when you grew permanent trees like limes, but there was also that period when you grew something almost like an orchid vanilla, when rather than deforesting, you'd protect the trees, let the vine grow and do your thing. So I've seen the different periods in Dominica's history, that I can comment and say, well it was impressive, and I can also say that I saw periods that I would hate to even want to remember, when some of the dangerous chemicals were being used. And to date some of these chemicals are still straggling into the island and the habits of using paraquat, gramoxone and some of these other thing to, as weedicide, that is also disappointing. So as a Dominican at heart, roots, I would say that from that angle we have not demonstrated a true love for the nature isle.

TY: And you say that some of the best times were the times when agriculture was king in the sense that people saw more how nature and the land were relevant to their day-to-day lives and therefore they had a different attitude towards it?

H: Yes.

TY: Do you think that now that agriculture is not king anymore and tourism is becoming king, do you think that's changing how people think about Dominica as the nature island and about nature in a good way, in a bad way, in a combination of both? How is it changing?

H: It's not changing in a bad way using the mantra of it being the nature isle, because that's one of the selling points of encouraging people to come. However, I think its hypocrisy in that if you're going to bring people here to the nature isle, we have to convince ourselves that we are truly protecting and maintaining Dominica as the nature isle. If you are bringing people at the airport and they see equipment dumping raw dirt in the river and that dirt makes its way down to the ocean, and that dirt, that silt covers and destroys the reefs, the repercussions, the rippling effect is enormous. And if you convince yourself that tourism is king and the tourist comes here and sees that, I doubt that tourism will remain king for very long.

TY: Apart from sort of in your professional capacity, in your work, well you told me some of the things you like to do, said you were a nature freak and

you like the birding and the so on and so forth, so this might be a slightly redundant question, but what are some of the main things in addition to those that you think bring you in contact with nature and help you to relate and interact with nature as part of your everyday life, outside of work? Whether, your leisure, community activity, whatever...

H: Well one of my leisures is photography, go out there shoot, photography that's one of my leisures, and as I said I like to just go out, just disappear. I do that all the time: just disappear, just go... Shell collecting, driftwood collection, I disappear on the beaches, walk and uh, within recent years I started paying more attention to turtles, and one of the things I insist that we should protect the turtles once they have come to lay their eggs, see that they're not interfered with and allowed to lay their eggs and return to where they came from. So that's one of the things I do. I like, I love to disappear, just go, just disappear into the wild.

TY: Away from just people and places

H: Away from everything else.

TY: Okay. And just do whatever, just be?

H: Yes, yes, yes, yes, just be. Absorb it, and by doing that I would take in stuff that I would not necessarily take in if I have a group with me. So I do that all the time. And that helps me, also prepares me, whatever I've picked up, to add that to another trip. So that's an extra ingredient to the trip.

TY: Um, but do you ever fear that by adding the places that you find when you disappear to the trip, are the same then when you go back to them alone, or do you have to sort of disappear to new places and find new places? Do you see what I'm saying?

H: I see what you're saying. The fact that people get fascinated turns me on, it lights me up. So the fascination is very satisfying, and for me it's another trip. But every time I go to a site, it's always my first time, I never get tired of it. Always my first time. So I've been to the Boiling Lake hundreds of time, but when I go it's always something, there's always a change, there's always a change, so I never get bored doing something over and over again. To see people lighting up, it even adds more spark, to the thing.

TY: When was the last time you went up to the Boiling Lake?

H: The last time I went up to the Boiling Lake was about 2 months ago.

TY: And what was new about it that time, can you remember?

H: In the valley of desolation some of the mud puddles I saw the last time were not there, new ones opened up, and a small geyser that's there, it was, there was more force to it and you could hear the sounds, so every time you go there's something different. For example, you may walk by in the morning on your way to the Boiling Lake and on the way back it's dried up. So there's always an expectation of something different.

TY: Okay, so I can see too from going up there frequently, you know it

H: Yeah.

TY: You can see those changes. Because I would walk by a mud puddle in the morning and in the afternoon walk by it again and I wouldn't even notice it was gone. I went to the Boiling Lake last time I was here. It nearly killed me, boy. I have never walked, oh my gosh, that was something else. So, what would you say are some of Dominica's most important natural assets, natural features, natural resources. What are the most important things here in Dominica?

H: The, first of all, one of the most, you have been, you probably have been there, one of the most unique spots in the entire Caribbean is to be able to go to Ti Tou Gorge and swim up that little narrow passage to the waterfall. It is one of - the first time I went there, many many years ago, I felt as if I was going into a strange place. And over the years I've seen groups and groups of people there, and there are folks who've done it over and over again, and the response is superb. The fact that you can go in there, and right on the entrance you get warm water and cold water, and sometimes it's really cold, by Dominica standards; that's one of the unique spots on the island and I will continue to go there. The mountain climbs, that is true, some of the trails having been maintained, that's great. The ability to go out there, out at sea and to see the whales in their natural setting and to also see the dolphins begging for attention when the objective is to go find whales is also a feature that I really love. And, recently to be able to go out there with a group and

wait for a turtle, to know that a turtle will come, to see a turtle come up. And you know, about two months ago it was just after three, two-thirty, three o'clock, we were at the airport and some chaps came and said, "Guys, you want to see something strange?" "What is it?" "A turtle, leatherback." "Leather-who? At this time?"

TY: During the afternoon.

H: Yeah, a leatherback turtle on the sand, the black sand, wanted to lay. And we just left the airport with the van and everything and just went there. And there was this huge leatherback just sweating, removing sand, and what fascinated me the most was not the turtle, but the ages of the people who were there witnessing that. A lot of children there, young children and nobody wanted to touch the turtle to disturb it, they were all watching that. Some visitors came took pictures... So that was fascinating. So um these are some of the unique things about Dominica that I really enjoy. And, uh, to be able to go up to the reservation where the indigenous people of Dominica live and to not only see them, but to mingle with them, but to go to some of the sights up there, it's really stunning. And to know that even some of them are my cousins... Dominica has this history of this interconnecting especially between the Indians and the Afro-Dominicans. We had the same common enemy, so it was very easy for us to intermarry, and...

TY: Okay. That was a very evocative answer, I must say, it was very... I can see why you're a good tour guide, I think I can see, because you got me, you really have me wanting to do some of those things now. And, uh, my last question is how would you define nature, and how would you define natural?

H: Nature is every- is a collection of it all. A collection of it all, everything together, that's nature. And that would include what we see on the above water, and what's present under the water, collectively that is it. But to remain, to be natural is, do not try to improve on it, in the sense of try to dress it up to make it more artificial than it, than it really was meant to be. Yes, you can come into an area like this and bring plants. It may not be, it may not have been natural before, but being here for so long and generations who did not see it like it was before, coming here and to see it now, to them

it's natural. And trying to make changes to degrade it, it's not good, it does not remain natural anymore to that generation. Just like it would not be for those persons who were here long ago who came in from Kew Gardens and brought these plants and tropical Asia and all other parts of the world.

TY: So a place like where we are now like the Botanic gardens may not have started out natural, but by bringing things in that are pieces of nature and allowing them to establish themselves, it has become natural to people who encounter it now?

H: That's right.

TY: Okay. So what about the other things that we see before us: the buildings and the cars and the posts, how do those fit into - not just in the gardens, but just in general. Because you said nature is everything, above and below, how do those fit into nature?

H: The buildings can be nestled in and become a part of the, of nature, of the buildings can be obnoxious. As we look across there, I personally think it's an abuse of one's privilege in nature to have nestled these things in such an ugly way. People may not have had the power, or either they did and we failed to exercise the power to prevent this from happening. Hence the reason why it is important that one with his conviction take a stand to prevent a degradation of what we consider natural.

TY: Hmm. Hmmm. So human-made things can be in nature and feel like part of nature if they're carefully planned and designed to be harmonious with the nature that they're in....

H: Yeah.

TY: But would they be nature, would they be natural, would they be part of nature or would they be in nature without degrading it?

H: They would be in nature without degrading it, but what you see here is an abuse of what we're trying to say right now, where you put all sorts of buildings in here

TY: Right, right okay.

H: And then, see that's the outgrowth, what we're faced with now the possibility of a road going in is the outgrowth of a, an acceptance of an abuse that was accepted back then. Now they want to add a road in here for traffic. Now, if this is done, what next? [inaudible] What's happening back there is numerous plants, right within there and traditionally Dominicans tend to walkercise right within there. It's also a lovers' lane so the social aspect is very important. And there are also some steps going up to Morne Bruce.

TY: Okay.

H: That people use to walk up.

TY: And all of those would be taken out.

H: All of those would be affected somehow.

TY: Okay.

H: You want to leave that natural.

TY: Yes, okay.

H: Rather than have cars speeding, look how people come through here right now, that should not be tolerated.

TY: What did you do before you did tour guiding?

H: I preached for about 20 years.

TY: And what part of Dominica are you from?

H: I'm from the Northeast, Marigot in particular. Right close to the other airport. I'm from that part of the island where we traditionally do not speak the Creole or patois.

TY: Okay.

H: That village, the people there were imported form Montserrat, St. Kitts, Antigua, Nevis, when the workers on the plantations left, downed their tools and wouldn't work for the landlords, they imported workers from these islands. So people there speak English and an English dialect called Cocoy. It almost sounds like a mixture between what you hear in Antigua and part of what you hear in Jamaica. Somewhere in there.

TY: Okay, yes, I get what you're saying. Okay. I'll have to try and make it up that way sometime.

H: So, people speak Cocoy we call it. Or some people refer to it and A-fuh-a-we language.

TY: And is that something that developed in Dominica, or if I go to St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat I would find something like it?

H: You would probably hear something close to it in Antigua, something close to it.

TY: But it didn't come here wholesale from there, it's something that more developed in Dominica after people were brought here?

H: Yeah, because remember that those people, English people hated the French, and there's not a tremendous French influence in Antigua or St. Kitts, you know, like places like here or St. Lucia.

TY: Yeah.

H: Even closer, say Grenada has a part that retains a French influence, even part of Trinidad. But these islands up north were really not French at all.

TY: Well, okay, those are my questions. Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me.

**C2: Interview with Mr. Andrew Magloire, Dominica Fisheries Department,
October 30, 2009 at the Fisheries Department, Roseau, Dominica**

TY: Could you say please for the recording your name, your age, and your occupation.

AM: I am Andrew Magloire, I am actually 47 years old, and I am the Head of the Fisheries Department in Dominica.

TY: Thank you. Where are you from in Dominica, where did you grow up, where were you raised, and where do you live now?

AM: I am Dominican by nationality, born in the capital, Roseau, and grew up there.

TY: And still live?

AM: Yeah, and still live in the city.

TY: Could you tell me a bit about the Fisheries Division, its work, its mandate, its programmes.

AM: The Fisheries Division, by legal requirements, literally is an institution established by the Fisheries Act of 1987 to administer the management portfolio with respect to the utilisation of all the marine resources within Dominica's EEZ. So that's literally our very broad mandate. And it would include issues relating to conservation of fishery and other resources, it would include the regulation of the utilisation of those resources, whether it's by fishers or by miners or by any other party, whether it's for recreational activities or something else. So our mandate literally is broad. It also seeks to enforce regulation that seeks to prevent the pollution of the marine environment, by virtue of providing certain measures of protection for the sustainable utilisation of those resources. So, as I said, it's a very very broad mandate.

TY: And how long have you been working with the Fisheries Division.

AM: I started working with the department in 1993, January 93, officially. I was with the department from October 92, but officially a member of the Fisheries Department since 1993, January.

TY: And could you tell me a bit about the fisheries sector in Dominica. What is the sector like and how does it operate?

AM: The fisheries sector in Dominica really is artisanal in nature, a small scale artisanal fishery. Regionally in the early years, when I started, it was based upon subsistence fishing where people mainly fished to provide food for their homes and whatever surplus that they had they sold to their neighbours and so on. The industry has grown a little beyond subsistence fishing to provide some level of commerce, in terms of the activities. We do not have a commercial fishery, per se, so it's sort of a quasi-commercial, commercial-subsistence type of arrangement. And because of that you'd find we have a very large percentage of persons operating as part time operators. So they have other occupations and they do fishing from time to time to supplement their income or to supplement their dietary requirements.

TY: Would you say then that the sector in Dominica is growing, that it's declining, or just that it's changing?

AM: The fisheries sector has been fairly stable over the last 8 years. It's not grown to any significant extent nor has it declined to any significant extent. So in that respect I'm saying it's very stable. The productive output, in terms of the volume of fish caught has also been fairly stable. Although what you would see is that there has been a shift in emphasis in the fishing type. So we have moved from inshore coastal fishing operations to more an offshore pelagic fishery. So when I say offshore, I'm talking about outside of beyond 12, 10 nautical miles. So a lot of emphasis is placed there. And by virtue of the topography of Dominica's marine environment, when we talk of inshore, we're literally talking about within the 1 mile, nautical mile reach from the coastline.

TY: Are there identifiable main fishing areas in Dominica?

AM: When you look at the coastal fishery, okay, a lot of it would develop based upon communities. So within each community, you'd have a group of persons who're involved in fishing, and they use their coastal fronts to do that fishing activity. What you will find though is that from community to community the type of fishing activity on a coastal basis used to vary

depending on the species that were available. So places like Bioche, Dublanc, they were engaged mainly in the operation of nets and pots, because the type of fisheries that they had available to them were mainly some of the reef components as well as the migrating jack species, okay? Whereas other communities like Fond St. Jean and San Saveur and some of those places, you find they were more involved in doing line fishing, because the waters in their area were slightly deeper and they had to fish off the edge of the coastal fringing reefs. And communities where they did not have much of a reef system were fishing sort of the offshore type of arrangement, so they were in and out in between these types of fishing opportunities. So it's actually fairly difficult to isolate Dominica in terms of fishing types based on areas, because every individual who fishes is not fishing for a specific species. So it's not species oriented, it is opportunistic fishing. So they catch whatever is available to them at that point in time. So you will find that each fisher may have a multitude of different methodologies of fishing, so he may use pots, nets, trawl lines, etc.

TY: And do people still sort of fish in the coastal areas off their communities?

AM: Yes.

TY: And are there fisherfolk associations?

AM: Yeah, in recent years, we've been... Well from very early we tried to form fisherfolk organisations because, again, at the community level it is the pooling of resources that helps to sustain and cut the, improve the economies of scale in terms of the operations. So it is something that you always want to promote. Not only from the cutting of the economies of scale, but also from the point of view of soliciting funding assistance to help to develop the fishing sector within these communities. Donor agencies tend to lend themselves more to providing donor assistance to organisations of that nature, so it's something that we've been promoting. Last year, we had a national association that was formed, which is sort of an umbrella organisation of all the co-operative structures spread across the island to give effective representation to the sub-sector of fishers at a national level.

TY: Do you do any fishing yourself?

AM: At this present point in time, no, but I did a lot of fishing myself. I started off by literally training fishers how to fish in terms of fishing technology. And not just how to fish, but how to fish in a conservative manner, paying particular attention to the integrity of the stock that they are exploiting, so that it can be sustainable. In the past you had persons fish because they felt that there was a never-ending, a non-ending bounty of fish available, and that perception is a very detrimental perception for fishers to have. So a lot of our focus was based upon trying to improve their techniques in terms of fishing, that would be more sustainable, trying to improve in terms of quality assurances and limitation on spoilage. So those practices once we had improved those practices, then it meant that the emphasis on trying to catch volumes sort of declined, and more looking at sustainable catches that you could preserve the fish and have better market value at the end of the day, that it would be a lot more economically viable for a lot of fishers.

TY: Do you consider fishing to be an activity that involves a relationship with nature?

AM: That involves a relationship with nature? Obviously. You have to recognise that fish in itself is a component part of nature, and the sustainability of fish is dependent upon a healthy environment for one. If the water is not polluted it means that the organisms that the fish depend upon can thrive more, in greater productive abundance, the biomasses can be increased and by that virtue you find that you can sustain larger populations of fish. So maintaining healthy reefs is a critical component especially for coastal fisheries. And so people begin to recognise that if you cannot sustain the health of the reef, then you cannot sustain the fishery. Because without a home the fish has to go somewhere else and therefore it's not available to you. So there is that understanding of the relationship between the fish as a component of the environment itself.

TY: And among these things that you've mentioned, what are some of the other things that you think fishermen learn about nature through their work.

AM: Well, like everything else, once the dollar begins to play a role in terms of the commodity component, you find people begin to lose that connection

between the link of the resources and its role in the environment. And hence the reason why as a department of government, we have to institute the various forms of regulation that would seek to create these punitive measures, so that persons who do not want to be reminded of the need for sustainability in terms of the harvest practices can be reprimanded for their poor practices. So in that sense, we create the environment that fishers will always remember that there is a link between the fish and the environment, and there is a link between the fisher and the environment in terms of how he carries out his livelihood. And if he wants his livelihood to be sustainable, if he wants his livelihood to be something that can be transmitted to his offspring, then he needs to recognise those critical components and the link therein.

TY: Apart from the focus on environmental preservation and conservation, though, do you think that there are things that fishermen learn about...

AM: Oh, yeah, the fishermen would have learned over long years of handed down practices from their forefathers and so on that would be sustainable in itself. And you would find those tend to be norms within the community, what you call common law practices, that you do not necessarily have to implement legislative frameworks to control those. So there is a strong sense of that, still. While that strong sense exists, there are the odd individuals who would want to defy those principles and do things otherwise, and so you'd find even within the community structures themselves, you have the, what you call the community policing arrangements where there's a lot of conflicts that develops between the person who would like not to follow the common law principles and persons who would like to uphold the common law principles, and hence you would find there's a drive nowadays for us to take some of those common law principles and put them into legislative law, so that they can be enforced more equitably, if you want to call it that, across the board.

TY: What are some examples of the common law principles that would apply?

AM: For example, in the case of the seine fishery, there is a principle that they use under common law arrangement that we take turns, okay? And

there are some persons that feel that the turn system is too slow, and by that virtue, they would want to set more nets than would be required under the common law principle and that puts the resource at risk. So we are seeking now to put in common law principles to maintain those practices under common law principles. There are things like, people have recognised over the years that certain traditional fishing methods like using poisons or toxins and so forth are not very healthy, so those are pretty much out because of legislative frameworks. There are issues relating to respecting certain areas, fishing areas, where certain fishing practices would take place in certain areas and other persons would want to use those areas for other things, other than fishing that would inhibit the fishing operations. So you would find again that you would have to begin to legislate so as to protect those traditional norms.

TY: What sort of relationship in general do you think Dominicans have with the sea and with the coast?

AM: Dominica doesn't... generally we don't have a very close relationship with the sea. And you will see that from the manner in which people treat the marine environment. Dominica has never really been a maritime country. Our focus and activity has been centred a lot on agricultural productivity rather than the utilisation of the marine environment as an economic earner. So you'd find that because of that there's not a very big appreciation of the value of the sea. So the sea serves mainly as a sink to dispose of things. People see the marine environment as, if I throw it out there it gets lost and then everything is good. But that's because they have no appreciation for what is happening below the surface of the sea. And because they don't see it then they think all is well. So that is really a serious problem for us. If you take a walk along the coastlines of Dominica it speaks for itself, the amount of garbage that you see accumulating on the beachfronts and so on and so forth. Those are issues that we have to begin to address. So with Dominica now moving slightly with a greater emphasis on tourism as an economic earner, there is a greater appeal now for people to begin to have further, more respect for the values of the marine environment. Because we still boast of being one of the top five dive destinations in the world. And you can only

continue that if you continue to maintain good health within these reef systems. But the reason that we have been able to maintain some of our good reefs is not so much an attribute of our behaviour, but it's an attribute of the natural, of the physical structure of the country, and so because we have deep slopes, you'd find that the fringing reefs do not accumulate a lot of the waste, it may get lost in the deeper slopes. So what is happening on the deeper slopes we have not been able to assess, but that doesn't mean that the ecology of the deeper slopes is not affected by these components as well.

TY: Speaking outside the context of economic value, in terms of leisure or recreation and so on, are the beach and the sea things that Dominicans use a lot?

AM: There is some activity in terms of using the marine environment for leisure and recreation but those are mainly associated with festive periods, like Easter weekends, August Monday weekends, that type of thing. Whereas you have the occasional Sunday outing where some families would go out and use the marine environment to have a sea bath and so on. Also there is the connotation where the marine environment is associated to medical uses. If you're suffering from a cold, you go and take a sea bath, it will help to relieve it. You have a burn, you know, you go to take a sea bath and it will help to clear it up fast. So there are medical benefits from using the marine environment that are utilised very strongly in Dominica. Apart from that, it's not a very big thing. So you wouldn't find a lot of boating activities where people use the marine environment for recreation in terms of boating, but most people bathe and do that part of it.

TY: What role, in a wider aspect would you say that nature in general plays in day to day life in Dominica?

AM: Nature plays a tremendous role in the day to day life in Dominica. As I say, by virtue of the topography of Dominica, it's not so much we dictating what happens on Dominica, but nature dictating what happens in Dominica. And it's not so much that we can boast of Dominica as being the nature island of the Caribbean because we have by our actions allowed the country to maintain that natural pristine nature, but it is because of the difficult terrain that sort of predisposes itself to not being able to be utilised as many

other countries would be utilised, from that standpoint. And that's my perception, I mean, somebody may want to see it differently, but I think in general that is the case in Dominica. Very difficult to put in infrastructure in Dominica and to maintain it because of the heavy rainfalls, because of the steep slopes, and so on. So it just makes it more difficult in terms of the economics to do it, and as well as the engineering challenges that it imposes as well. So, for example, you go to Barbados, the average cost to build a house in Barbados might be almost half what the average cost to build in Dominica would be, simply by virtue of the fact that the terrain...

TY: Speaking of your own self, personally, in your own day to day life, what are some of the things that you do that you would consider experiences of nature or interactions with nature?

AM: I like solitude. And Dominica offers that a lot. I mean, you can just, within five minutes get out of Roseau and be in solitude with nature. Quiet spot, very close to the city, and after a very hard day's work, you can very quickly just run out to Trafalgar, Soufriere, you know and just within ten minutes drive, you're in an area that you'd never think that...

TY: That you can get peace and quiet, even though it's not far from the city...

AM: Temperatures are different, the air quality is different, so that's one thing. I have a passion for biodiversity, animal biodiversity, that sense of it. And so I tend to do a lot of things where species tend to be endangered by certain human activity, I go out and I do sort of a drive to try and protect it, or even to develop culture practices that would help to minimise the human pressure on the natural systems and so on. So those are some of the things that I do in relation to nature.

TY: What are some of the species that you think are threatened by human activity?

AM: We have some land crabs, for example, we have the freshwater crayfish. We have the snakes, the boa constrictors that I do some work with trying to alert people to the benefit of these things. I used to be a teacher before, so I used to try to educate Dominican student about the value of the snakes and how it is a critical part of the ecosystem, and the functions and so that they

carry out. The centipedes. While people may have a mortal fear for them, they are a critical component in the ecosystem because they control roaches. So those linkages between organisms in nature that people take for granted and would want to quickly dispose of them, you try to educate and teach people about the values of them, so that they have a greater appreciation for their functions.

TY: So what are some of the critical functions of the snakes, for example?

AM: Oh, the snake is a critical controller of pests for agriculture, like rodents, rats, they control a lot of rats; as a juvenile snake they will control a lot of the crickets and the grasshoppers that normally feed around a lot of the crops, so they have that critical function to play in terms of even helping to preserve agricultural productivity. And better yet, our snakes are not poisonous, so there is no need to be going out killing them just because you have a mortal fear of them. So if people learn to appreciate that they're not poisonous and they provide all of these additional facets to your everyday living, they will not harm them, and I think we have a win-win situation.

TY: Do you think those messages are getting across to people?

AM: Well, they are to some extent. I think the programmes that we run with the schools are very useful because they, it's like bridging the gap from the older generation and creating a new dynamism with the new generation to see things differently. So in the older generation there was the issue that you see a snake, on sight you kill it. So now you're changing that perception, so that the younger generation don't adopt it by natural transmission of the information, of knowledge that you'd expect, but to change those mindsets and to change the connection that there is between these environmental issues.

TY: What would you say are some of the other ways that the younger generations in Dominica, the ways that they think about nature, relate to nature, whether flora or fauna are different from the ways their parents and grandparents would have?

AM: I think there are two components. There are negatives and there are positives. By virtue of the media, the types of media that we have, television,

it has brought on, and not only in Dominica, throughout the world, it has brought on an environmental crave, so to speak, where people begin to try to have more value for the environment, but then in my view a lot of the value associated with it are negative energies, where people don't look at the component resources or biodiversity and look at ways and means of how they play a role, but then at the end of the day, they are still components that can be utilised by us, whether it is for food security, for economic activity and so forth. But what we have to do is to strive to establish those balances in terms of use, and not just to look at them as components that should be 100% under protection. So we have a protection crave that has taken over in terms of the environmental protection lobby and framework that I think is wrong, particularly for economies like ours where the resource base is so small, okay, and if we have to depend heavily on imports to sustain our economic virtues and so forth, then it means that we are shooting ourselves in the feet. What we have to do is to learn to appreciate the biodiversity structure that we have and to establish frameworks and management structures for use that are sustainable in terms of our practices.

TY: Do you think that young people today use nature in a way that's different from how the parents and their grandparents would have used nature?

AM: It's difficult to judge and assess that unless you go through a programme that really seeks to determine that. I cannot say yes, I cannot say no in that respect.

TY: What is, I mean I know that you don't have young data on this, but are there a lot of young fishermen for example in Dominica?

AM: And that's why I'm saying that, because while we say that the fishing industry maintain a certain level of stability over the years, you would love to see a lot more in terms of the injection of new blood, a lot more young persons involved in the industry, and you don't see that. But then, there's a questions there to ask also. if you have a lot more new blood coming into the industry, what does that mean to the resource? So while we may want to, while we on a general framework may want to see an injection of more activity of youth and young persons in the industry itself, we also have to

question what is the viability of that, in terms of sustainability, in terms of the utilisation of the resources. So that is a very difficult balance to really... I mean, particularly when we do not have the capacity to do much in terms of assessment of the integrity of our resources. So we are exploiting resources from which we really do not know the true biomass, or we really do not know the true population status of the species we're exploiting. So we have to be careful in terms of how we relate those things. And particularly when assessments like that are done, you have to be careful as to you don't see that you need a burst of energy of youth to flow into that sector, because what you'd be saying would be very irresponsible because you cannot quantify what you require, at what level of exploitation that you need to be at to sustainably utilise those resources. So this is where I tend to exercise the precautionary approach to doing things, and looking at the economics of it.

TY: You had mentioned before, you talked about Dominica as the nature island, could you tell me a bit more about what that means to you or what it says to you, what you understand when people say Dominica is the nature island?

AM: Well, the advent of internet, cell phones and the fast way of communicating and living has changed in a very significant way the type of community structures that I grew up with. And if you look at our youth today, the ways in which we would interact with the environment are not the ways in which those youths nowadays interact with the environment. Because the modus operandi is different. They are no longer involved in playing these games and going hunting and doing these sort of things. They're more intricately involved in texting over a cell phone, or spending tremendous amounts of their time on cell phones and playing computer games and that sort of thing. So the connection with the environment is very very very, in my view, limited among our youths today. While there are some groups that try to promote hiking and you know, going out to really appreciate nature, you find it is very few youth who actually get involved in that. And also too, you find because the agricultural sector nowadays, people see agriculture now as a lesser economic opportunity, opportunistic way of

livelihood, again you find people moving away from nature in terms of that. So they want an office job, they want that type of thing.

TY: So, and correct me if I'm wrong, part of what you're saying here is that the idea of Dominica as the nature island is not just its topography or its forest or whatever, it's the content of the way people interact with nature as part of their lives and that is changing, and so what the nature island means is changing?

AM: Yes, it's changing very fast. I recall in my youth going to school that recycling was a major component of our daily life. You had a plastic bag that you would use until it could not be used anymore. You bought a bottle of jam and it became the glass that you used at home for drinking water and doing those sorts of things. As I said, nowadays, associated with the fast lifestyle, you have all these fast food containers and everything is disposable, and the whole recycling framework has gone out of the window. You know, we always composted our food peels and so on. Nowadays you don't have time to compost, you just pack it in a plastic bag, put it out for the garbage truck to take. So all of those connections with nature and utilising nature in that sense have been lost, sad to say. And it's a very difficult road to bring it back. It's a very very difficult road to bring it back, unless you have some very strong clear policies and legal frameworks put in place that make it mandatory that you want to go back that route.

TY: What role do you think tourism plays in changing the idea of Dominica as the nature island?

AM: The type of tourism. We speak in terms of advertising component, of nature tourism. We advocate something completely different. I believe nature tourism, if you talk about nature tourism, and you advocate nature tourism, it's one in which you try to take nature and put a very big value on nature, and you limit the numbers that want to, who are able to access that nature, but you make it high value. An emphasis on cruise tourism with mass numbers of persons is not in the best interest of nature tourism, at least in my view. So really, we need to really sit down as a country and rethink what we're doing. If we're really serious about nature tourism, then our marketing strategies must be different to address nature tourism issues. If

you drive through Dominica, you will see everywhere cups and garbage and so, all the litter along the streets, everywhere you have roads. That doesn't sell the virtue of nature tourism; that's a disconnect between people who're using nature but have not associated the value of nature in that respect. While you will hear a lot of talk about nature tourism, everybody talking about nature island, oh Dominica is the nature island of the Caribbean. What does that mean? Because you cannot control the greenery that it has? How do you contribute to the prudent use of garbage disposal? How do you contribute to your daily lives in terms of how you respect those nature facets? These are critical things, and unless our people begin to make those connections, then just speaking nature tourism is just a buzzword, as far as I'm concerned.

TY: So it's sort of using the features of Dominica without necessarily respecting nature in the way that it should be respected?

AM: Yeah.

TY: Okay. What do you think are some of the most important, valuable, exciting, interesting features of nature in Dominica?

AM: You cannot fight nature. As an architect, as an engineer, and all of the physical development that we have, they all try to mimic nature. Because by virtue of our existence we are part of nature and therefore we tend to always want to be in sync with nature. Just look at Dominica! The landscape in terms of the structure is very pleasing. It is calming, you drive through the mountainsides, it has that soothing effect on you because of the temperature, because of the coolness, because of the clean fresh air that you breathe and so on. So it is so tremendous in terms of the value that these nature structures have. When you look at Dominica again compared to a very flat piece of landscape that doesn't appeal in terms of the structures, so then you have to create those structures to make it comfortable, you don't have that problem in Dominica. The variations that you see in Dominica in very short distances, it's amazing. So all of those assets in nature are very pleasing to the human existence. We have hot springs, they are therapeutic. We have rivers that you can take very cool refreshing baths in, you know? We have the mountains and the hills and so forth that you can hike and exert yourself in that type of

way, to maintain physical fitness. You have the natural beauty, in terms of the flora and fauna. So it's just tremendous in terms of a country having all of that packaged in one little area.

TY: What role do you think nature will play in the economic and otherwise development and progress of Dominica as a country in the future?

AM: If you look at the economic activity in Dominica, already nature has been driving that. The mere fact that people are speaking of Dominica as a tourism destination from the point of view of nature, it's not they creating the nature, it's the nature creating the assets that you can sell, that cannot be found elsewhere, and you say look I have a product that you would love to have an opportunity to take a piece of - not in the physical sense of it, but in the sense of a memory that you will go and live with for the rest of your life. So from that standpoint, yeah, it drives a lot of the economic activity. When you eat any fruit produced on this soil, you will be pleasantly surprised in terms of the texture and flavour and the quality of the fruit that you eat. That's driven by nature. The fact that we have a very rich agricultural productive sector is driven by the facets of nature of Dominica. So it's important, it's important to recognise how much the nature of the country is driving the economy of the country. Also, whether it is driving it in a positive or a negative sense is correct as well. Because by virtue of the topography of the island itself it doesn't lend itself to you being able to do as you please. So a lot of people see that as an economic downturn, it is a negative stimulus to growth, because it is so difficult to work. So you can look at it from a number of different facets in itself: whether nature is driving the economic activity or whether nature is inhibiting the economic activity, it all depends on the view that enables you to see the connection.

TY: And what would you say, because we've been talking about nature, but we haven't actually said what nature is, so what would you say nature, what do you think nature is, and what do you think natural means?

AM: To me nature is everything that I cannot create. It is the embodiment of the natural formations. So the mountains, the rivers, the valleys, crafted by forces that are not man-made. It is the biodiversity that has been bestowed upon this beautiful gem island, if you want to call it that. We are unable to

create that, in that sense. It is the floral beauty that comes about by the seasonal changes, the dry season, the changes in the colours and so on and so forth. This is nature. It is the sounds and echoes that you hear from all of the various insects and frogs and organisms that cry whether in the night or the early hours of the morning. The rising of the sun and the new day, the setting of the sun at the end of the day. It's all of those things. The songs that they make to encourage mating activity and so on. Those beauties and wonders, that's what nature is. It's literally the things that we have no control over but the things that we marvel over in every respect of our lives. To me that's what nature is.

TY: What about practices like agriculture, flower gardening, that sort of thing, are those natural activities?

AM: These are mimics of the natural systems. I do not have the opportunity to have an orchid, to go to the forest and enjoy the beauty of an orchid in the natural setting, so I take it and I bring to my home or to a garden where I can create it. These are creations of a semblance of what nature has to offer and we try to bring it close to us and to make it more... that's all it is. Agricultural productivity is simply a mechanism that we have; we have taken from the natural systems to produce it for our own individual benefits and so on and so forth. I don't call that nature, I call that human intervention to satisfy whether it's our food requirements or our economic requirements or so on or commerce related requirements, that's not nature. These are artefacts, and by virtue of those artefacts we are creating problems for nature. Because we want to mass produce we have fertilisers, we have poisons, we have all those sorts of stuff, and it's creating problems for nature.

TY: And those were all of my questions. Thank you very much.

C3: Interview with Peter, December 3, 2009 in Roseau, Dominica

TY: Can you say for the recording your name, and your age please, and what you do?

P: My name is [redacted], everybody calls me [redacted] I'm about 50. I'm from Mahaut.

TY: So you were borned and raised in Mahaut and you live in Mahaut still.

P: Yeah, born and raised in Mahaut. No other place in Dominica for me.

TY: So tell me a little bit about yourself and what you do?

P: Okay, well, me personally, I'm an unemployed person. By profession I like to say I'm an actor. Basically I work with an organisation, or used to, when it was functional called the Movement for Cultural Awareness, when it was functional. As an actor, I'm involved in a lot of theatrical work; I'm a member of La Couer des Arte de la Dominik, a theatre group based at the Alliance Francaise. Presently we work with secondary schools students. I also do a lot of other things. I love sports, I'm a qualified West Indies cricket umpire. What about me again? I'm just a community-oriented person, very active in community activities.

TY: What things do you do in your day to day life that you consider to be interactions with nature or experiences of nature or relationships to nature?

P: Okay, with nature what things do I do? Well, I wouldn't say it's actually on a day to day basis, but certain times we used to do a lot of community projects in terms of clean-up projects, cleaning rivers, and that kind of thing. We encourage people not to pollute, litter, not to destroy the environment and that kind of thing. In our theatre group we do certain kinds of public announcements looking at the environment, climate change, looking at our vulnerable areas such as sea swells, landslides, and the sort. And any other thing that I'm called upon to do that I say to myself is relevant and important to the environment.

TY: So the work that you do with the theatre group looking at environmental change and environmental vulnerability and that sort of thing, that is work that you're asked to do by some agency?

P: We weren't asked to do it, but we developed a project and then we would seek assistance from the Environmental Coordinating Unit, okay, so they were a partner with us in that and we did a two-week summer camp for secondary school students.

TY: And why did the group feel that it was important to develop this project?

P: It was important because we felt that we needed to make a change in terms of how people treat the environment, and it would be—if you want to change people's attitudes it's better that you start with the younger kids because the grown ups, they're already hardcore in their thinking and it's more difficult to change the hardcore elderly person. But with the children you can get a message across easier and then they can also help you in disseminating information.

TY: So what can secondary school age children do about sea swells and landslides and so on?

P: What can they do? Well, they can't do anything directly about seaswells. And landslides, what they can do about landslides is more encouraging people not to, in relation to how they cut trees, how they for example, the traditional way of gardening, we have to look at more environmentally friendly habits in terms of ... So we feel if we can get the info to them, then they can help us in spreading the news and getting the older people to understand more. Whereas they themselves, personally, they may not be able to directly influence what happens, but they can help be advocates of the message.

TY: From spending time with you, I've heard you talk about going to the river and that sort of thing. Are those things that you still do? Going to the river, going to the sea?

P: Yeah, well now I go more to sea than river. The river now is once in a while really. Because the rivers are not what they used to be. I mean, I used

to like to go to the river in my community and dive and take a swim. But now, you cannot dive, for one, and you can hardly swim, because there are no basins. Although there are still one or two left in my community on the Belfast River, but it's not like it was before. So the river is not that interesting again, it's not interesting. Except on holidays when we go there to cook a river food or something like that, but it's not like it was before where you would look forward to a weekend just to be by the riverside, breaking almond and those kinds of things, go and collect mango, those kinds of things.

TY: And you still go to the sea?

P: I go to the sea. Not very often, once in a while, I go down to Rodney's Rock or in the village itself, I just go take a swim, you know? Swimming is good therapy, you know, that kind of thing.

TY: How often is once in a while?

P: I would say probably twice a month to the sea, yes.

TY: When you used to go to the river more often, what was it that you used to enjoy about it?

P: What I used to enjoy about it? Just bathe there with my friends and swimming. We had this huge tree around that we used to play hide-and-seek in the water, and you could swim through the roots of the tree. So it was fun and thing. You would go there, you'd probably sit there for a while, break a lot of almond and thing, and full a gin bottle. So it used to be, it used to be fun, man. You sit there, you bring your pot and your fish or whatever, and you cook your food by the riverside too. It was nice socialising fun, man.

TY: Did you ever do any gardening, any fishing?

P: Not, not fishing, not fishing. I never liked fishing. Gardening, yeah, in the early days, like in the 70s, mid 70s to early 80s, yeah, I used to be, I used to do gardening. As a matter of fact, I spent three years in the hills Yeah, I spent three years of my life in the hills, I mean, just staying out of Babylon, so to speak. I mean, because I kind of believed in the Rasta philosophy and that kind of thing and we wanted to spread a consciousness of eat what you grow

and grow what you eat and do away with foreign foods and foreign habits. So I did a lot of gardening, yes. I love to do gardening, but because of the fact that you know, you don't have land of your own, so I used to work on somebody's property—they gave me permission to. So it was nice fun, making a garden is nice fun, nice nice fun.

TY: What did you enjoy about that, apart from the fact that you could grow what you ate and eat what you—

P: Exactly, exactly. You can grow what you eat and then you can make money to get the other things that you need.

TY: Apart from that was it something that you took pleasure in, the work itself?

P: Oh yes. I love seeing that you go to a piece of land all covered up with trees and bush and shrubs and then you clear it up and then you plant. You clear it, burn off all the shrubs and so, because we used to burn to clear, you know, that kind of thing. Then dig it and plant it and see your plants growing up and then start weeding and it's nice fun when you go and reap your harvest, you go and pull out a dasheen and see that you have a very big dasheen. Yeah, it was rewarding.

TY: What kinds of things did you grow?

P: Well, we used to grow things like—our garden used to be everything in one, eh? So things like dasheen, bananas, all different kinds of bananas, plantain and thing, dasheen, tannias, sweet potatoes, then you would have things like greens, corn, probably eggplants, okra, you know all those things, pumpkins, root crops, and vegetables, generally so to speak.

TY: And in your youth, when you were about a teenager or so, what sort of things do you remember doing then that would have involved experiences in nature?

P: The amount of things I used to do then, involving experiences in nature, as a teenager— Well, again, we used to be very vibrant in youth groups and that kind of thing. So we were even more active in terms of taking care of our community and the environment, because we used to do a lot of hiking, we

used to do a lot of visits of sites and thing, because at that time when I was between, say about 14 and 19, Dominica wasn't as open as it is, so all the sites were not as known, so we'd take pleasure in going to visit the sites, different sites, Freshwater Lake, Boiling Lake. And then we would go climb rivers, especially in our community, to the source, to discover the source of the river and that kind of thing, you know? And then our usual community clean-ups and that kind of thing.

TY: Do you think it would have been more enjoyable then, going to places like the Freshwater Lake and the Boiling Lake at times when they were less accessible than they are now?

P: Enjoyable—well, the only thing that's different now is that when we used to be there, most of the time if you go with a group, it was your group. Now, there's always other people and I find it's very crowded in some of the sites now, especially when the cruise ships are in port and that kind of thing. So you tend to stay away from the sites. And then, because of access roads to most of the sites, it's more accessible to people and you don't have that privacy in the sites that you used to have before.

TY: What are some the natural places and spaces in your own community that you can think of?

P: In my community, natural spaces?

TY: Or things or features.

P: Oh. In Mahaut we don't have too many natural spots, eh? In terms of sites and that kind of thing. In Mahaut there isn't too many.

TY: Or just features of nature. It could be a particularly striking tree, it could be the shore, anything that comes to mind.

P: Oh, well we have one natural spot in the village, we call it Rodney's Rock, that's just outside of the village, that's one area. And we have, well, in our community we have about six seven rivers. Let me count them for you—in Mahaut itself we have ... three, but in the wider constituency we have three more, so in the constituency of Mahaut we have six rivers and if we include

the Layou River which is the border of the constituency, that would make it seven, so that's good.

TY: Do you think that there are things you learned about nature through the things you've done in nature over the course of your life, like going to the river, the gardening?

P: Oh yes, you learn a lot, you learn a lot to appreciate the things that you have, because, for example, when the rivers started drying up then you started missing your basins and that kind of thing, so there we learned the importance of preserving and safeguarding the watersheds too, so that the rivers can remain full and that kind of thing.

TY: Where in Dominica are your parents from?

P: Oh, my mother is actually from Grand Bay in the south, my father is actually Antiguan in status. I would like to think that he was Antiguan, but basically when his parents came to Dominica they were in Massacre, so he is more associated with Massacre, but my mother is actually from Grand Bay.

TY: And about how old is your mother?

P: My mother now actually she would be 80-something, yeah, the lower part of the 80s.

TY: And how do you think the way that you have related to and experienced nature in your life is different from how your parents would have known and understood and related to nature?

P: Well, um, in their time, in their time it was different because of the fact that people mostly looked towards survival more than anything else. So as to the consciousness of nature there wasn't much emphasis on that. So people saw, for example, hurricanes as a seasonal thing and probably there wasn't much understanding as to what makes a hurricane more intense and that kind of thing. How destroying the environment contributes to global warming and how global warming contributes to the intensity of hurricanes and the frequency and that kind of thing. So they didn't have the information that we have. They were more or less, I would say, not primitive, but you can say of a kind of primitive mentality, just doing things that are necessary to

their survival, as compared to now. We see, more recently we see a lot of things happenings that didn't used to happen, probably ten or 15 years ago in terms of, like sea swells, although in my day I have seen the sea come and take houses and thing. There were more, when I grew up as a boy, there were more houses on the bayside. Okay, like right now you probably have like two lines of houses on the road, but probably when I grew up we had three and four lines of houses. So now that we are more aware of this kind of thing so it makes us more conscious and some of us, I mean, more determined to really preserve nature than they were in their time.

TY: You said that they were more oriented towards survival. Do you think that—how would nature have contributed towards their survival?

P: Their survival? Well, um, probably I would say it this way. Probably they didn't see nature as contributing directly to their survival, you know? But probably the use of the land, okay? I mean, to provide food for them and that. So to them at the time, they were not conscious, but now you see that there's more, there's a bigger relationship between the survival now. And I'm talking about how things that we do really help to affect the way that we live in certain instances. Like I was mentioning of the sea swells, and even now in certain areas you have more slides and that kind of things and it's because of how we build and construct. We have more, I would say, even more loose water in terms of lack of drainage. We need more drainage because of how we construct our homes and the facilities we put in place for wastewater and that kind of thing. So that's how I really see it.

TY: You said that people these days have more information about nature. Do you think that people in your parents' generation would have known things about nature that we don't know? Just as we know things about nature that they didn't know?

P: Hmm, well, the things they know, to some of us they pass it on. Because for them, they used to look—in one way they knew a lot, they knew certain things more than us. For example, their planting habits was strictly by study of the moon, by the moon phase, okay? So everything they did, they would have to consult probably the moon, an almanac, because almanac and those things have been there for a long while. So they would consult the almanac

and look at the moon and even their fishing so, so I think in that way, yes, they had certain information. Because certain things, even for me in making a garden I didn't know the correct way to plant and I didn't know anything about it. I thought it was just go and clear a piece of land and just put plants in the ground. But you have a certain way you would clear the land and it is not the same way you would plant it. Like, for example, if you're clearing, especially on a slope, you would clear from down up, but when you're planting you plant from up down. Okay, so those kinds of things. So yeah they had certain information, I mean, probably by observing, you know? And nature to them was probably a little more glaring to observe than it is to us because I mean, at the time, they didn't have that level of electricity that we have, so they were better able to see the effects of the moon as compared to us now and that kind of things.

TY: So you clear the land from down up and you plant from up down, why?

P: Why? Okay, because when you're clearing the land and the same practice is when you're weeding is that you don't want, you're clearing so you don't want to—if you clear from up down, then whatever you're cutting would be falling on the things that are down, okay, so if you're clearing and you start from uphill, you'd be throwing things at your back. But if you start clearing from down, you clear there, so whatever you throw at your back is on cleared land. But when you're planting, you can't start planting from down because especially on sloping land, because when you're digging to plant, whatever rolls on the plants that you're planting. For example, if you're planting dasheen you have to make a hole and you put the plant in the hole. But if you start from down, when you plant here and you get here, all the stones would roll down and block, okay? So you start planting up and you keep moving down, so your land is totally clear and you have more control of waste and stones and that kind of thing.

TY: Do you have any children?

P: No, none.

TY: Any nieces and nephews?

P: Oh yes, plenty nieces and nephews, over 20, over 30 nieces and nephews.

TY: How do you think that people in the generation of your nieces and nephews, how do you think that their relationships to nature and their experience of nature is different from how you would have experienced nature at their age?

P: Well, the younger generation now, although they have more information to help them understand nature, but they are more influenced by other things of the world, the material things, the false values of the world, okay? And that happens through the use of television and information from outside, the so-called imperialistic approach to world development up to now has given the younger generation a false impression of the true value of nature and their whole environment around them. For us in Dominica and for some young people, they still believe that nothing here is good, anything from outside is the best. So that kind of mentality. And it's because of the whole mentality of the world right now. The mentality of imperialism to dominate creates a kind of blockage in the minds of the younger generation. Although they have the information, some of them are easily influenced by what they see, by being copycats, imitators, you know, and that kind of thing, so that affects their real judgement.

TY: So they don't do the kinds of things in nature that you would have done at their age?

P: There are some conscious youths around that do things but there are some in my community, I would say—I don't want to call them naïve, but there's a certain number of youths, well they don't care, okay? They don't care. To them, it's not important. They look more at the glaring things in life, the false images, the false values of life and that is what drives them. So you find that all they think of is how to make an easy money so they can buy the latest style and them kinds of things there, as compared to what can they do to help make the environment better and thing. This is not of interest to them, because they don't see it as an immediate income, you know, rewarding activity.

TY: Just to be the devil's advocate, you could be interested in having money and the latest styles and so on and so forth and still be interested in going

and hanging out by the river with your friends—one doesn't necessarily rule out the other.

P: Yeah, well, yes some of them, some of the young guys still like going to the riverside, although for some of them it's not by choice, but it's just that some of them they don't have water at their home to take a bath. But what you find happening is that they use of the riverside is not as popular as it used to be. And some of the guys feel, like in my village, if you leave the village and go by the river, then you're out of the action and there's the activity that they might be involved in.

TY: What about the idea that Dominica is the nature island of the Caribbean, both as it's used as a tourism slogan and as a general way of describing Dominica? What does this say to you, what do you think it should say, what do you think it says to other people, when Dominica is called the nature island?

P: Well what I think it is saying is that Dominica is still a natural paradise. I mean, for me, Dominica is paradise. That's number one. And then it ought to be saying or it's supposed to be saying that when you come to this country you're coming to a country where you will see nature in abundance in terms of, I mean, our greenery, for example. I mean, approaching Dominica—I haven't travelled the world, but I've travelled throughout almost all the islands of the Caribbean and you don't see any country as green as Dominica is. And the other thing is our abundance of water, fresh clean crystal clear water. Unpolluted, I mean, although some farmers would put a little gramoxone and thing, but generally if you had to take a sample of the waters in Dominica anywhere, it would be of a very high standard for even drinking, not to mention for bathing and other things. So we have this that demonstrates that its nature island. In terms of the geographical set-up of the place, so to speak, if that is the correct word, I mean there is no other country like Dominica, you know? I mean, there are countries with higher mountains than we have, but still not as many hills and valleys like we do have. So all this is just unique in itself. And how people's attitude is is another plus for us that demonstrates that we are a nature island. Because Dominicans tend to treat visitors better than Dominicans. It's something that is— What again in

terms of makes us nature isle? There's a certain level of not just uniqueness, but it has to do with the way we do certain things. Even certain foods that we eat and so on. So all these, you know, show that there's a little difference.

TY: Certain foods, like what?

P: I mean the foods we eat, the way we prepare them, like our provisions or you know, things we would cook. Like we would cook certain things that people other places wouldn't cook it that way. Like, in Jamaica, you find they only eat breadfruit roasted. In Dominican we can do breadfruit how many different ways. And there aren't many places in the Caribbean they do a one-pot cooking. I think they do them in Grenada, they call them some other name, but its not like the way we would make here. You can take all the foods that we have and just make one pot of everything. So our whole way of cooking one pot is unique to us.

TY: So you think there's something about Dominica that produced that one pot form of cooking?

P: Yes, yes, I would take that way back to slavery days, you know. Especially when the guys, the *neg mawon* and those people, I mean, when they ran out on the slave owners and go up in the hills, their time wasn't spent to have different pots, they would just cook one pot and if they were cooking, they would try to make it fast because remember they were hunted and that kind of thing. And our maroons were always on the run, so they had to do everything quick and they had to be moving from one spot to another, althought they used to have their headquarters and some of them used to have their camps, you know, in certain places. So you would find they had to cook fast and the best things when it comes to cooking fast, to make sure you have a well-balanced meal, is to put everything together, so you know when one cook, all cook, that kind of thing.

TY: So you think the nature island of the Caribbean is an accurate description of Dominica?

P: Yes, although now they're trying to change it to some other name, but I still find it's good. Although now it's losing its significance because of some of our habits, eh?

TY: How so?

P: I mean, certain things we do, even presently. We tend to lose, again, like I was saying earlier, the respect for nature. You find a lot of littering is taking place now, more than before. We still, our way of gardening is still a way we need to look at because it can be just as harmful as it is beneficial in terms of producing food. So all these things, you know, need to be improved on.

TY: How is the way of gardening harmful?

P: I mean, because we still throw trees down arbitrarily; we don't create windbreaks, we don't look at soil erosion in a serious and effective way. We don't look at our water catchments, securing our water. We still, you find some people still go building close to— And this is all these things are happening already and they can be very detrimental if you're the nature isle. And then some of the kinds of things that we import into the country we can do without, some of the foods.

TY: What would you say are some of the most important aspects or features or properties of nature in Dominica?

P: Features. Well, all of Dominica is just one big feature of nature, you know? But some of the most significant properties is the abundance of water, our lush vegetation and greenery, our fertile soil. Um, what again I would say is features of nature that are beneficial to us? Basically it stems from that. I still find the way the country is built, the mountains, the terrain can be both a disadvantage and an advantage. In terms of protection against wind, protection against hurricanes. According to where the hurricane is coming, you find the mountains can be very helpful in breaking down the wind force and that kind of thing.

TY: But a disadvantage in what way?

P: A disadvantage in the terms of, well, it's very steep, so it gives you less space for, for example, mechanical agriculture is very difficult. Some of the lands, they're not conducive to growing certain crops, but yet still you have no choice, that's what you have, you have to do it, so that can be a disadvantage and then another thing of nature—I said the water?

TY: Um-hm. You said water, vegetation, soil.

P: And then we have a lot of wood, lumber, if we really have to go into lumbering. There's a lot of wood in Dominica that can be useful and profitable. I mean, we don't have like in Guyana, but yeah.

TY: Do you think that Dominica's natural assets or features or resources can contribute to the country's development?

P: Well the way they can be used, I think first of all we have to look at proper marketing of some of our features, and have to look at how you package it too, the packaging. We have to look at systematic use, okay? We have to look in terms of systematic use of some of the resources. We also have to look at our use of land, how we plan use of our land and thing, allocate lands based on the suitability for what. We have to look at the use of our water in terms of making it marketable, package it properly so we can get maximum returns out of it. The same goes for our timber. I'm not talking about just cutting indiscriminately, but systematic use, okay, and replacing. We cut and plant, cut and plant, so you can maintain sustainability. You have to look at that. Okay, our timber, we have to look at the use of our sand and aggregate and stones, because we have a lot of mountains and most of them are real stone, eh? And good stone, hard stone that is we go into them seriously. I mean, now there's mining *vay ki vay* on the island. I mean government just gives permission to miners just to come in and mine our sand, mine our stones, without proper impact studies, so to speak. Some of them don't even have a proper plan in terms of use and conservation, you know, and that kind of thing. But these are the things that we have to sit down and put proper policies in place so that we can utilise them. Because for me that's what I understand by development and we talk about sustainable development and we talk about conservation and we talk about, you know, preserving the environment. We have to look at these because these things are there for us to use, to better life for us, to improve our lives. So it is up to us now to have a proper plan and policy in place as to how we utilise our resources, so that we don't just do it indiscriminately and then and the end of the day they would disappear, okay, and for want of a \$2 you let something just go away. We should put in place proper use, planning and policies that would make

sure that we don't just finish them, that they will always be there. And some things you cannot replenish, but those that you can, you should try to, as much as possible, to maintain them.

TY: How do you think nature in Dominica might be a problem for the island's development? Do you think it has posed a problem for development?

P: Nature in Dominica? Nature in Dominica is not a problem except for all the, for the steepness of hills and that kind of thing and mountains. It's not a problem, you know, for our development. I think in some cases it can be seen as an asset, you know, depending on how you look at it, in terms of what you're looking for and what it is. You know, what you want. But I don't see nature as a problem to us. Outside of the hurricanes and that kind of thing. But then if you build your houses properly, you would withstand some of this.

TY: Are there any natural features of Dominica, places, spaces, things that are special to you personally or that are important to you personally that you can think of

P: Well, the whole of Dominica is important to me as my birthplace. Natural things, I mean special interest in terms of things, I mean we have— Not really, you know? I don't really, I mean, I don't— I would not give Cabrits any more significance than Soufriere, that kind of thing. I see all of them as being important and all of them as having a part to play in the whole development, so—

TY: You spoke about how nature could contribute to Dominica's development as a country, the economic development? Do you think there are ways in which nature in Dominica, the things that you mentioned, the forests, the water, the terrains even the natural disasters, have shaped Dominicans' identity and character and culture, who they are as a people and what Dominica is as a country?

P: Yeah, to a certain extent I would say I think so, you know. In the sense that because of our mountains, the terrain, you find the early settlers, it wasn't conducive to them to come and settle on Dominica. So that in itself was

positive, so it allowed Dominicans to own Dominica, so to speak, most of them, although there were a lot of estate owners, you know, from London and France and that kind of thing. British and French, there were a few Spaniards, but not so much in terms of estate owners, they were more French and British. So the fact that we are so mountainous, we are not flat like Barbados and thing, that kept them out and away. And that allowed what is happening today. If you go to Dominica, compared to let's say St. Lucia, you would see, one would probably see 80% of commerce, business being owned by Dominicans. Whereas if you go to St. Lucia— So that helped us in a way. So we actually own the island and although you see now efforts are being made to sell out a lot of land, Dominicans own Dominica and that is because of the past, what happened in the past, that kind of thing.

TY: Anything else you can think of in terms of how Dominican personalities or attitudes have been influenced by nature?

P: In terms of the influence? No, well, I think the other thing is that some of our early pioneers, they were firm in their conviction as to what Dominica meant to them and probably what they would have wanted for it. Probably they were not as scientific as we are now or would have liked them to be then, but there were clear and that helped to set the kind of foundation we can stand on, I mean although they say that no one man is an island, and no island can say it's totally independent, so to speak. I mean, you depend on each other for whatever reasons. But then, we have a certain level of ownership and something that is ours and nobody, we're not going to let nobody take it away from us, you know? I would want to think so.

TY: So you're saying that these people set an example in terms of ownership and self-sufficiency for Dominica?

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

TY: Do you think that the growth of tourism in Dominica has changed the way people think about nature and relate to nature? And if so, how?

P: In terms of tourism, and how from tourism people think about nature? Hm. That's a mixed one, eh, for me. I mean, in terms of yes, tourism has grown a lot in Dominica and then it made people, yes, it made people more

aware of certain valuable things that we have that we used to think it was nothing. So it showed some light in relation to those things. In terms of the development itself in Dominica, I still feel that we're kind of attracting the wrong kind of tourists. I think we should aim at really developing. Although we still say we're the nature island, but then we should aim at more looking at nature lovers, not cruisers. Okay, people that want to come and stay a week because I think that would be more beneficial to us. Because you have, like they say, 500 people coming to the island, but what is the spending power of that 500 as compared to the few French people that would come and overstay for a weekend? That's more profitable, to a certain extent. So that is the kind of thing. And we should try to develop that aspect of tourism. And sell it out. So then we need to put in more facilities and things instead of just building 200 and 300 room hotels, we should be thinking of going into the interior and setting up nice little *carbets*, natural *carbets*, covered in straw and what the old people used to use, bamboo and that kind of thing and give the people a different experience. Because they go to Puerto Rico, they go to Miami, they go to Jamaica, they go to Trinidad, they come to St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Grenada, all is the same thing. You want to put them in a big hotel and thing. We should try to get them into our forests, into our bush, live like our Rastas live, which is a different experience. Eat the roast food and the cook food, forget the rice and the potato and all those little things that you're bound to have. And then concentrate on, you know, more of the things that we have here, do more local things, you know, to sell out to them. These are, that way I think it would be more profitable and it would help and make people a little bit more conscious of nature in itself because if you stay in Roseau, if you're in Garraway or Fort Young Hotel, you're not seeing anything. There's not anything different as compared to— Probably if you're looking out of your window you might see something different, but if you go to Trafalgar or you go up to Belles or you go somewhere in LaPlaine, these areas there, you're going to be seeing things differently, you know. It will be a different experience for them.

TY: So we've been talking all this time about nature. What would you say nature is?

P: Oh. Nature. Nature is the existing force around us which encompasses everything that we didn't make, everything that we meet there. It involves the trees, the rivers, the mountains, the sun, the moon, the wind and thing. The whole environment around us, natural environment, you know. So to me that's nature.

TY: What about things that we do make, like gardens and farms and botanic gardens and that kind of thing?

P: These are not, these are not natural things. They are, some of them are things that are used within a natural setting to—how would I say? To, they're used within a natural setting to make you more conscious of certain things or make you more aware of certain things. But these in themselves, they are not natural because they were manmade. I see nature to be the things that we can't make. Anything that we make, it doesn't matter how a guy will set up a nice, hmm, whatever—it's man-made. And I don't think man can make nature.

TY: So, for example, you would say that if you have a garden or an estate, you're using parts of nature, because you can't make the plants—

P: Exactly.

TY: You can't make the soil, but the farm or the estate itself is not nature, is not natural?

P: A garden can be, okay, a garden can be natural in how you do it. For example, if I plant a garden, basically the most I would really do is to clean the land and put the seed in the soil and everything else is left. But from the time I start putting chemicals and those kinds of things then it can't be natural again, okay? If you just put a seed in the ground, then, yeah then the force, the whole natural chemistry produces the food out of that. But once you start adding artificial things to make it bigger or grow faster and thing, then it is not natural anymore. So on that level, I can see, you know, a garden can be considered a natural thing depending on how you do it.

TY: And what does it mean to be natural? What does natural mean?

P: Natural is to be you. Live within your environment, not influenced by artificial things or them outside things, so to speak. Although there are some natural things on the outside that might influence you and your decisions in doing certain things based on the experiences of others. But the natural really is you yourself utilising what is around you and that kind of thing. That's how I check it.

TY: And for places, natural means the place is not manmade?

P: Well, you can't have a place that's not manmade, eh? Okay, for example, I make a house. But then I can have a naturally made house. But then how I make the house would determine how natural the house is. For example, if I go using a lot of cement and that kind of thing, because I want to make a strong house, although the cement is made of natural sand, natural stone and the house— But there are certain things in it that just isn't natural. As compared to if I was to go and make a wooden house out of straw and that kind of thing, I would consider that more natural than a concrete house. And even the effect you would feel. In a naturally built house, you would be at least a little bit cooler than in a concrete house.

TY: Would you say that when we talk about nature and when we talk about the environment, when you say environmental conservation and protecting the environment, does environment mean the same thing as nature? Does nature mean the same thing as environment?

P: Yes. For me, yes, it means the same thing. I mean, because God is matter in motion and if God is matter in motion, to me then it's the same. The environment is just a reflection of matter in motion and its natural. A man cannot make the wind blow, he cannot make it stop. Can't tell the sun to shine because he sees there is a raincloud around. Can't stop the rain from falling. So to me, they're the same. Matter in motion. God.

TY: And that's it. Thank you very much.

P: You're very welcome.